





MOUNT BLAIRY GOTTLIGE,
BANFF,
BANFFRINGE

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale Her infinite variety."



Broadway Translations

AKSAKOV

CHRONICLES OF A RUSSIAN FAMILY

Translated by
M. C. BEVERLEY

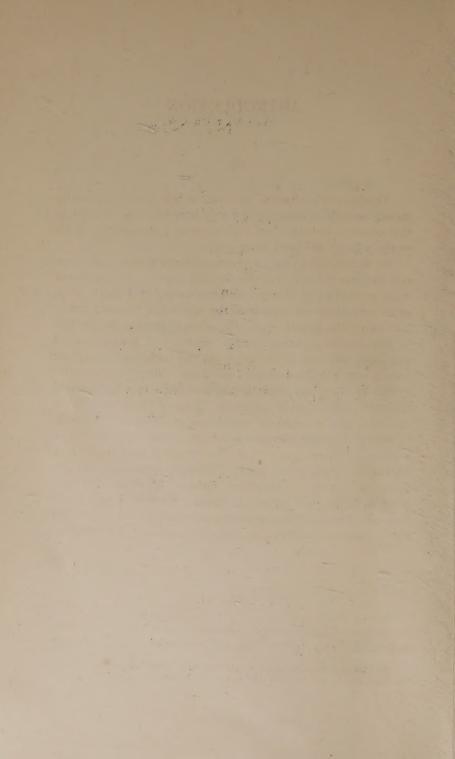
With an Introduction by PRINCE MIRSKY

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T

Aksakov, whose name was but a few years ago hardly known outside Russia, has by this time become, at least in this country, something of a classic—so a new edition of his works will scarcely need an apology.

In Aksakov Russian Literature seems to have gained a new and decisive victory over the English reader. This is all the more gratifying, as Aksakov presents an aspect of the Russian mind very different from those by which the Western public has been hitherto attracted. He seems to come as an antidote to the current opinions on the "message of Russia," to all the loose talk and looser ideas on the imaginary thing our friends over the Channel call l'âme Slave. After the effeminate graces of Turgenev, the destructive logic of the Tolstoite Tolstoy, the sublimely grotesque vistas of Dostoyevsky, the relaxing and melancholy sweetness of Chekhov, the rude brutality of Gorky, Aksakov comes as a relief and a breath of fresh air. Pending the time when English readers will find themselves prepared to taste of Russia's ripest and choicest fruit—the poetry of Pushkin—Aksakov, together with that more familiar (and, after all, greater) book War and Peace, may stand as an eloquent reminder, that Russia is not the exact synonym of either morbidity, or insanity, or barbarism.

H

Sergey Timofeyevich Aksàkov¹ was born on 20th September, 1791, in Ufa, then the chief town of the extensive

¹ The correct Russian pronunciation of the name might best of all be conveyed to the English reader by the spelling—Uksahkuff.

and newly colonized Orenburg Province. His father, Timothy Aksakov, and his grandfather appear in the Family Chronicle respectively under the names of Aleksey Stepanovich and Stepan Mikhaylovich Bagrov. His mother—the Sophia Nikolayevna of her son's books-was the daughter of a high provincial official and had received an education which raised her considerably above the provincial society that surrounded her. The more or less adulterated XVIII century "enlightenment" on which she had been bred, and which she imparted to her son, must not be lost sight of as the ultimate background of his mental development. The story of Aksakov's first eight years is told in Years of Childhood; of his next years in Recollections. In 1805 the Gymnasium of Kazan, where Aksakov was at school, was dubbed a University, without any essential change being at first made in its character. So Aksakov became a student. He graduated from this University in March 1807; but he confesses that neither he deserved the degree he got, nor was the University in any way qualified to grant it.1 His studies at the University were practically confined to French and Russian Literature (he was passionately fond of the theatre and of reciting) and to the collection of butterflies. In 1808 he came with his parents to Petersburg and entered the civil service. He soon made some literary acquaintances—the most important of these was Admiral Shishkov, the head of the conservative and anti-French literary party, whose devoted partisan Aksakov had been ever since his University days. He also frequented the actor Shusherin who gave him lessons in declamation, and Aksakov soon won a certain reputation in literary and theatrical circles as a gifted reciter. His literary and theatrical friends all belonged to the die-hard party, and with this party Aksakov is closely identified till about 1830. He wrote, but none of these early productions of his rise above mediocrity. In 1816 he married and retired to the country, living successively in Aksakovo-the "Bagrovo"-and Nadezhinothe "Parashino" of the Family Chronicle. His wife was the daughter of a veteran officer, a woman of extraordinary

¹ It was some time after Aksakov left that the University of Kazan won a European reputation by producing the great mathematician, Lobachevsky.

virtue and commanding character, who bore him fourteen children. Two of these, Constantine (b. 1817) and Ivan (b. 1823), became later on very considerable writers.¹ In 1826 Aksakov, finding himself completely incapable for business-like farming, came to Moscow, and again applied for a post in the government service. Admiral Shishkov, who was then Minister of Education, gave him a post in the Censorship in Moscow. In this capacity Aksakov remained for several years without distinguishing himself for either good or evil. In 1837 his father died, and he inherited a considerable fortune. He quitted the civil service and lived henceforward as a private gentleman in Moscow, in an estate he had purchased near Moscow. As for his Eastern possessions, Aksakovo and Nadezhino, which he was to make so famous, he never again visited them

Meanwhile, his old literary friends were dead or dispersed. The brilliant period of Pushkin, the Golden Age of Russian poetry, was almost over without having roused the sympathy of the old-fashioned Aksakov. A new school, equally different from the archaic classicism of Shishkov and from the new poetry of Pushkin, was coming up. The first stories of Gogol appeared in 1832, and Aksakov for the first time in his life seems to have been struck and attracted by a fresh and vigorous literary work. He soon became intimate with Gogol, and his house became a haven of refuge, an inner sanctuary, where alone of all places the young writer received unlimited admiration, verging almost on adoration and hero-worship. Aksakov and his son Constantine, the founder of Slavophilism, admired in Gogol an originality, a raciness, a purely Russian quality, which they were unable to find in Pushkin. adoration which surrounded Gogol at the Aksakovs' was unlimited and uncritical. Gogol's realism (a term which needs many qualifications, which however would be out of place here) unveiled to Aksakov his real self. In 1834 he published (anonymously) a short sketch The Snowstorm, which shows him completely emancipated from all archaic reminiscences

¹ Both were Slavophils. Ivan was the most influential panslavist journalist in the second half of the century. His influence was especially great during the crisis of 1878.

and on his way towards the Aksakov we know. In 1840 he began-it would seem, under direct pressure from Gogol-his Family Chronicle. In 1846 fragments of it appeared in a miscellany, again anonymously. In 1847 he ventured his first publication in book-form: this was Notes on Angling, a technical book on sport designed without any literary pretensions; but the success of the book encouraged Aksakov to continue writing. In 1852 appeared Notes on Shooting in the Orenburg Country, which met with still greater success and was enthusiastically reviewed by Turgenev. In 1855 appeared the last of this sporting series, Tales and Recollections of a Sportsman. This was followed in 1856 by the publication in book-form of the complete Family Chronicle to which were now added Recollections. This time the success was tremendous. Dobrolyubov, the most influential critic of the day, pronounced Aksakov without qualification to be the foremost of living authors. No sooner had the book left the press than it became a classic. The Years of Childhood of Bagrov the Grandson, which appeared in 1858, though greeted with a somewhat less amazed enthusiasm, was also immediately accepted as a classic. Aksakov, meanwhile, had been suffering from illness since 1847; about 1858 his state became aggravated and he spent the last year of his life amid constant suffering. But even on his deathbed, racked by cruel torments. he continued working: after his own he was writing the life story of his sister; it remained unfinished. He died on 30th April, 1859, in his 68th year.1

III

Aksakov's place in the history of Russian Literature is somewhat peculiar. It is difficult to classify him—difficult to assign him to any particular period, or to any particular

¹ Besides the works mentioned, Aksakov left a series of interesting Memoirs on his literary and theatrical connexions. Of these the Reminiscences of Gogol are an invaluable first hand source for the understanding of that great, complex, and puzzling personality.

department or genre of Literature. He is very much by himself, a phenomenon sui generis, without either predecessors or followers. The date of his birth would assign him to the Pushkin period, but all his early sympathies were with a still earlier school, the "Slavo-Russian" followers of Admiral Shishkov, who sought their inspiration in the Slavonic Bible, and, though saturated with French classicism, were declared enemies of all literary Gallomania. During his intimacy with the stage Aksakov mixed with second-rate epigones of the XVIIIth century comedy, many of whom he loved as friends and admired as writers.

The first impulse that aroused the dormant personality of Aksakov came from Gogol. To those who are familiar with the work of that great writer this is rather a bewildering statement. There is little in common between the exuberant, exaggerated, rich style of Gogol, which is always in the extremes of either rhetoric or burlesque—and the steady, balanced, restricted, though abundant, style of Aksakov. Both, it is true, indulge in long descriptions, too long perhaps for the hurried tastes of a modern reader; but how dissimilar these descriptions are— Gogol's are all alive with metaphor, simile, bold hyperbole, and daring impersonation; Aksakov's are a model of keen, lucid exactitude. Gogol's may be an excellent starting point for a gorgeously fantastic picture; Aksakov's may almost be utilised for drawing up a map. The true meaning of Gogol's influence on Aksakov is however of another kind. Gogol, by audaciously introducing matter that had been hitherto considered unpoetical, opened Aksakov's eyes on to the extensive and abundant world of his exact, scrupulous, and-a classicist would have said—trivial memory. Aksakov began to realise that the matter of literature might be the whole of life, and in due course made the whole of his life the subject of his books; though it must be understood that this phrase—the whole of life—was never interpreted by Aksakov as widely as it has been by Mr. Joyce, or even by Marcel Proust.

Aksakov was shy and reluctant to profess himself a writer. He began cautiously and modestly—the first book he ventured to publish over his name was a technical treatise on angling—and it was only gradually that stimulated by success, he rose to higher and more ambitious spheres. Success certainly

doped him: during the last three years of his life he hardly let the pen out of his fingers.

His books are realism if ever there was: there is nothing in them that does not strike one as strictly photographic. Appearing in an age when Russian realism was at its most vigorous period of growth, they were enthusiastically received by the young school. But, however acceptable to the age, their realism was of a different sort than that of Turgenev and Goncharov; Aksakov's realism lacks that peculiar shade which is not without ground understood to be the essential characteristic of the Russian novel. It is a much more simple and uncritical realism, it lacks the ethical note which is so prominent in nearly all his younger contemporaries. Aksakov's memory was as honest and as catholic as his retina, and he arranged his compositions without any regard to ethical or social values. Turgenev's, Goncharov's, Ostrovsky's works have always a definite moral key to them; and their contemporary critics had the time of their life in discovering (an easy task) these keys and in expounding their messages. Aksakov alone, among ethical realists, was an ocular realist. And his works were used by both sides—the Radicals and the Slavophils—for the illustration and corroboration of their pet theories. Aksakov himself was certainly a Slavophil. He was passionately attached to everything purely Russian. He was one of the first enthusiasts to revive the immemorial and longabandoned Russian institution of letting one's beard grow (though curiously enough he continued shaving his lip, thus acquiring an appearance rather Dutch or East Anglian, than Muscovite). But for all his slavophilism and fanatic Russianness he made his books less exclusive and more universal—with a universality approaching that of naive and primitive literature—than anything the Westernizer ever wrote.

But the *naiveté* and primitiveness of Aksakov is a point that must by no means be overdone. In fact it is a point to insist on which is rather dangerous. His style, to begin with, is certainly simple; but is not this simplicity of a more sophisticated kind than that of the popular chap-book, or even than the elaboration of a popular romance? There is certainly elaboration in this simplicity. It is a studied

simplicity; studied with great care and preserved with consummate skill. It was far from simple for a Russian of 1845, fresh from the glories of Gogol and full of a literary culture of two score years, to write a style so emphatically free from all literary reminiscence, from every bookish influence, from every foreign word or expression. To attain to this must have been a long and difficult process. We do not possess Aksakov's MSS. and cannot trace the mysterious growth of the Family Chronicle between the beginning and publication, but we have the Snowstorm of 1834, which is yet very far from the final goal. The studied simplicity and "objectivity" of Aksakov reaches its maximum in Years of Childhood which, compared with Family Chronicle and Recollections, is even more epical and more stately. It lacks the lyrical passages, which are numerous in the earlier work, and its harmonious stateliness contrasted with its subject, the experiences of a boy from four to seven, produces a curious and peculiar impression, the impression one might unkindly suggest of a second, not of a first, childhood.

It is generally supposed and has always been repeated and Aksakov himself confirmed this view-that the whole series is a history of fact, unadulterated by creative imagination. The Family Chronicle has not, as far as I know, been critically studied with a view to establish the degree of its depending on hard fact, and this may be impossible to do. But speaking a priori it is highly improbable that Aksakov did actually limit himself to the literal notation of family traditions alone. He must have also exercised his creative power, as he must have had a creative memory to write Years of Childhood. And of course historians do very well not to use the Family Chronicle as a document. But however few, or however many, elements of this book may be traced to an uninterrupted tradition reaching into the XVIIIth century, one thing is certain: what creative power he did exercise was not directed by theory or by any preconceived ideas. The vivifying details introduced by him were begotten by the mind's eye, not by the mind's desire. Aksakov's imaginative memory was procreative, not constructive. Hence that first and last impression of photographic, unswerving, incorruptible, fidelity to fact which Aksakov produced on his first readers (and all of

them, too!) who were in many ways better able to judge, and which he still produces on his readers, whether Russian or English.

IV

Aksakov may be interesting as the exact historian of a phase of Russian social life—the colonization of Bashkiria by pioneering squires. But what does the English reader care for Bashkiria and its Russian colonists? How many English people have ever heard of such a part of the world? What can all these obscure steppe-rivers, Buguruslan and Ik and Sok, with names unfamiliar and strange-sounding even to the average cultured Russian—what can they mean to the English reader? There is infinitely more romance in the more familiar story of the Far West. Of course it is not for his subject that Aksakov may pretend to the place of an international classic. And yet he can pretend to it—this confirmed nationalist—for there is on his work an unmistakable impress of universality. He is universal perhaps more than any of the Russian writers except Tolstov. His very aloofness from any particular epoch makes him in a way superior to time. He belongs neither to the time he wrote about—the late XVIIIth century, nor to the time he wrote in—the mid XIXth. Though he describes a society that was hardly reached by any winds from the outside he is least of all provincial. Though a champion of linguistic purity—he is least of all exclusive. He does not avail himself, it is true, of the most universal and unifying element of literature—he has very little sheer narrative interest. But he succeeds in giving his characters and their emotions the widest significance. He makes them permanent and monumental. He does not, like so many modern realists, give prominence to the unfamiliar and the peculiar at the expense of the familiar and commonplace. His attention is equally and impartially directed on all the facets of life-like that of a child's-and that is why his impressions of childhood (though in some ways so senile) are ultimately so true. Though he describes an out-of-the-way semi-exotic milieu, he is free from all exotism. His method is opposed to that of those modern

novelists who delight in discovering an exotic and unknown world in the East End or in the Five Towns; he makes you discover a strangely familiar universe, and you leave his book with the impression that you were born and bred in the Bashkirian Steppe. His art is thus in many ways opposed to the essence of the modern novel-which (to quote Mr. Chesterton) is mainly occupied with what people differ in, not with what they agree in. Exaggerated and far-fetched comparisons are naturally odious, and it may be ridiculous to evoke the Bible and Homer à propos of Aksakov. Of course he has neither the absolute universality of the one, nor the absolute artistic perfection of the other. Still—with dueregard to proportions-if I were pressed to name what literary works Aksakov approaches nearest, I would reluctantly-name the Book of Ruth and the second half of the Odyssev.

D. S. MIRSKY.



A NOTE

This translation includes *The Family Chronicle* in extenso. This is followed by three chapters from *The Years of Childhood of Bagrov, the Grandson*, in which is described the death of Bagrov the Grandfather, the central figure of the *Chronicle*; and by the first three parts of *Recollections*. The fourth part, which tells of Aksakov's University years, is largely concerned with intellectual and literary movements, and its interest is of another kind than that of the rest of the book.

It must be noted that in the Family Chronicle and Years of Childhood the principle characters are given fictitious names; but in Recollections the real names are preserved. The "concordance" is given in the translator's notes.



BOOK ONE AKSAKOV'S FAMILY CHRONICLE



SKETCH I

STEPAN MICHAILOVITSCH BAGROV

EMIGRATION

My grandfather found his home on the family estate in the Province of Simbirsk, where his ancestors held the land in fief from the Muscovite Tsars, distasteful to him. It was not for lack of this world's good things-for forests, corn-fields, meadows, and all necessary appurtenances were his in great abundance—but because this estate, which had been the sole property of his great-grandfather, was now shared by others. Briefly, the case was as follows. Three generations of the Bagrov family in succession had had but one son and several daughters. Certain of these daughters had married, receiving serfs and estates as dowries. The latter, it is true, only represented a small part of the whole property; but the ownership was to a certain extent mutual; and, now, besides my grandfather, there were four other masters. My grandfather found this intolerable, for he was a straightforward, impulsive, passionate man, and could endure no intriguing in his household. For some time past he had heard much of the Province of Ufa-of the inexhaustible wealth of its vast plains of virgin soil, of its incredible abundance of game, fish and all the fruits of the earth; also of its simple inhabitants,1 and how they were easily persuaded to part with whole territories for a trifling sum. To make such a bargain it was merely necessary, so the tale ran, to gather together a dozen or so of landed proprietors of the Bashkirian Districts of Kartobyn and Karmalin, and to place two or three fat wethers at their disposal, which they could kill and dress

¹ The Bashkirs, a race of Finnish stock mingled with a strong Tartar strain. They are, for the most part, Moslems; and speak a Turkic dialect allied to Kirghiz. In 1897 they numbered 1,402,083. Those who inhabit the Steppes are pastoral nomads, whose culture dates back for a period of more than a thousand years. [Tr.]

according to their custom. The next items were a cask of brandy, some jars of the strongest Bashkirian mead, and a huge barrel of country beer—a striking proof that the Bashkirians of that day were not quite scrupulous in their observance of the laws of Mahomet-and the whole affair was in trim. Certainly, one would think, such an entertainment might well last a whole week, and possibly two. Among the Bashkirian folk it is not considered etiquette to settle business at once, but each day the would-be purchaser must say: "Well, friend, worthy man, 1 let us talk over this little affair of mine!" If the guests, after eating and drinking the live long day, are not quite gorged, and not too utterly weary to sing their monotonous ditties, to blow away at their Tschebysgas2; and to dance—or rather to strike the absurdest attitudes while remaining standing or squatting in one spot—then the oldest of the party, clicking his tongue, shaking his head, and turning away from the petitioner with pompous mien, will exclaim "The time has not yet come-bring along another wether!" Naturally another wether is promptly produced, brandy and mead follow in due course, and the eating, drinking, singing and snoring recommence. But like everything else in the world the revels come to an end at last; and there comes a day when the oldest landowner, looking the purchaser straight in the face, says: "Thanks, little father, heartiest thanks! Now tell me what you want." Thereupon the purchaser with true Russian subtlety and cunning. will protest that he wants nothing at all, but as he has always heard that the Bashkiris are the best of folks, he wishes to be on friendly terms with them, and so forth. Casual remarks will follow about the boundless possessions of the Bashkirs, and of the scant reliance to be placed on leaseholders.3 who

variety of notes.

 $^{^1}$ A formal and polite form of address in Bashkiria. [Tr. S. R.] 2 A native flute, from which the Bashkirians can extract a great

³ These tenants, or, as they were called, permit leaseholders, were people to whom the Bashkirians let their lands for a yearly rent, or for a lump sum which covered a certain number of years. It frequently fell out, however, that when the leases were expired, the permit-tenants declined to vacate their new dwellings. Hundreds of law suits were the result which generally ended in the leaseholders being left in undisturbed possession of their very-cheaply-acquired estates. In this way enormous areas of Bashkirian lands are now in the hands of Tartars, Mescheryaks, Tschuvasches, Mordvins, and other Crown Peasants.

STEPAN MICHAILOVITSCH BAGROV

are ready enough to pay the ground rent for the first two or three years, and then will cease payment altogether, and refuse to quit the land, thereby forcing the Bashkirs into wearisome lawsuits, which, as often as not, are decided against the landlords. After a bit of this sort of talk which, alas, describes a state of affairs only too true, it naturally comes about that a proposal is made to relieve the good Bashkirs of some of their burdensome property; and frequently whole districts are purchased for trifling sums, and the purchase duly legalised by a formal deed, in which it is impossible to state the exact area of the land, as it has never been measured. Usually natural features of the land serve as boundaries, for example: "From the mouth of the Konlyelg rivulet as far as the withered birch tree beside the Path of the Wolf-and from the withered birch straight along to the Parting of the Waters-and thence to the Fox Holes, and so on." Such accurate and incontestable boundaries would often enclose tracts of ten-twenty-even thirty thousand dessiatines. And for these vast properties a few hundred silver roubles were willingly accepted, not counting a hundred or so of roubles for the feast.

My grandfather was greatly interested in these tales, although he was a man of the strictest integrity, and considered it no light matter to cheat and betray the kindly Bashkirs. He reflected long on the subject, and finally concluded that, without in any way wronging the natives, it would be possible to purchase a good-sized estate in the Province of Ufa for a quite reasonable sum, and to transfer half of his serfs to this country, where, later, he and his family might set up their dwelling. This last part of the project was the most important in his estimation, as of late years he had been so worried by the endless wrangles with his kinsmen, as to the mutual control of the ancestral property, that his dearest wish was to quit the house of his forefathers, to forsake the old family nest, and in another country to seek that peaceful unmolested life, which to him-a young man no longer-had become an absolute necessity.

So, as soon as he had saved up a couple of thousand roubles, my grandfather decided on his venture. He took an affectionate leave of his wife—Arischa as he called her, when

he was in a good temper; and Arina, when he telt cross. He kissed and blessed his four little daughters, but especially his newly-born baby son, the last scion, the sole hope of his ancient and noble stock. He never set great store by his daughters. "What good are girls to me?" he was wont to grumble. "They run away from home as soon as they get a chance. To-day they are Bagrovs, to-morrow Schlygins, Malygins, Popovs, Kalpakovs My only hope is in Alexei." Thus, my grandfather, on the day of his departure; and he crossed the Volga and set off for the Province of Ufa.

And now I had better describe my grandfather to the reader. Stepan Michailovitsch Bagrov, as he was called, was slightly below the middle height; but his deep chest, his strikingly broad shoulders, his sinewy hands, and the massive muscular build of his limbs all bore witness to his extraordinary bodily strength. He used to relate how, in his vouth, when he and his comrades used to test their strength in military sports, he could shake off a whole mass of attackers as easily as some stately oak shakes the raindrops from its leaves at the first puff of wind. His features were regular; his eyes were large, beautiful, and darkest blue; easily lighted up by passion, but beaming with kindness and good humour when nothing had occurred to put him out: thick eyebrows, a well-shaped mouth-all these gave his countenance an open and noble aspect: his hair was light brown. All who knew him, trusted him; his word, his spoken promise, were more sacred and reliable than any known or unknown oath, or legal act. His innate judgment was clear and sound. It is true that he, like all his contemporaries of the Russian landed gentry, had little or no education: he could scarcely read or write Russian, and when he first entered on his military service he had only learnt the first four rules of arithmetic and the use of the counting board, as he was wont to relate in his old age. Most probably he only remained a short time in the service, for he never rose higher than Regimental Quartermaster. However at that time the nobles had to serve long periods as privates and non-commissioned officers; (unless indeed they had been passed through all the intermediary stages while yet in their cradles, and from Sergeants of the Guard blossomed out direct into Captains of

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the Line). I know very little about Stepan Michailovitsch's military life. I only recollect that he was employed in the pursuit of the Volga thieves, that he distinguished himself by his astuteness and reckless daring; that the robbers knew him only too well, and feared him like the Devil. On leaving the Service, he spent some years on his estate of Troizkoiealso known as Bagrovo-and developed into a capital landlord. He was none of those who overlook every bit of farm labour like an overseer, and must always be on the watch when any grain is stored or sold. It was but seldom that he interfered with the management of the estate, but his suggestions were judicious and of the greatest service. Any act of injustice or fraud roused his inexorable wrath. My grandfather, according to his own light, and influenced to a certain extent by the spirit of the times, argued in this way: "It is not well to punish a peasant in such a way that his day's work is ruined, and his own comfort as well as his family's is destroyed: . . . to withhold his wages is just as bad; to separate him from his family, to send him to a distant estate. or to inflict hard labour upon him, is still worse, because of the evil moral consequences likely to ensue through the same separation from his relatives—to send him to prison—God forbid! That would be such a disgrace and ignominy, that the whole community would bewail him as one dead, and the culprit would henceforth consider himself a lost and ruined man." Furthermore I must explain that my grandfather was only inexorable in the heat of passion. With his rage, his severity vanished. This trait of his character was so well known, that the offender often hid himself until the storm had passed. But as time went on the peasants were in such perfect accord with him, that he had no longer any occasion for anger.

As soon as his affairs were in good order, my grandfather wedded Arina Vasilievna Neklyudova, a young lady of impoverished, but old and noble family. And I take this opportunity to observe that ancient family descent was my grandfather's weakness. His serfs numbered a bare hundred and eighty souls—all told—but he could boast his descent, and with perfect right, from the Varangian Princes, and prized his seven-hundred-year-old nobility far beyond all riches or

honours. He had relinquished all thought of marrying a wealthy and charming girl, to whom he was greatly attached, simply and solely because her great-grandfather had not been of noble family.

So much for Stepan Michailovitsch's character. And now to resume our interrupted narrative.

My grandfather crossed the Volga from the Simbirsk side, and travelled across the steppes on the left bank, past Tscheremschan, and Kandurtscha, past the Red Village—a settlement of time-expired soldiers—and gained Sergijevsk, a high-lying spot situated at the mouth of the River Surgat in the Bolschoi Sok. Sergijevsk is now a little town and has given its name to the sulphur springs which lie twelve versts distant, and which were formerly known as the Baths of Sergijevsk. The farther my grandfather penetrated into the Province of Ufa, the richer and more luxuriant grew the land. Within the circle of the Buguruslan District, near the Abdulsch Government brandy distilleries, the mountains first came into view. My grandfather stayed awhile in the District town of Buguruslan in order to ascertain details as to the land for sale: this town rests on the flank of a lofty mountain beside the Bolschoi Kinel, of which the natives sing:

"The Kinel flows

Not deep—yet swift,

Full of green slime. . . ."

In this part very little Bashkirian land was available for purchase, A very considerable part had been given away to the Crown Peasants—after the Akayevian Revolt, and before the general Amnesty—which had formerly been owned by the Bashkirs; part had been seized by the lease-holders; and part had been bought by settlers from the West. From Buguruslan my grandfather made excursions in the districts of Bugulma, Birsk, and Menselinsk (the last two-named places being now included in the Circuit of Belebei). He visited the exquisite shores of the Ik and the Djoma. An enchanting land! To the end of his days Stepan Michailovitsch loved to recall the wondrous impression made on him by the sight of the fruitful and verdant shores of these delightful streams. Nevertheless he would not permit himself to be carried

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away by their charms, and decided on a spot in a district where the purchase of an estate from the Bashkirs would not entail a string of inevitable quarrels and lawsuits; where his right of possession could be made perfectly clear to these people; and where the sum agreed upon could be handed over to the then possessor of the land. My grandfather, to whom the word lawsuit was as bad as the plague, resolved only to purchase a demesne which had already been sold to an earlier purchaser, whose legal right to the land was indisputable. In this way he hoped to avoid any future litigation. But in the long run it turned out that he had been sadly taken in, for when the youngest of his grandsons succeeded to the estate in his fortieth year, all sorts of disputes over the purchase had arisen and had to be settled. Very unwillingly my grandfather quitted the banks of the Ik and the Djoma, and wended his way back to Buguruslan, where he bought an estate from the lady of the manor, Madame Gryasevau, situated five-and-twenty versts from the town, on the banks of the deep, impetuous, brimming Buguruslan. From the town to the Crown demesne, Krasny Yar—a stretch of forty versts —the country at that time was quite uninhabited. And what wealth—what beauty this river could offer! The water was so clear that a coin dropped to a depth of fourteen feet could be easily distinguished lying on its sandy bed. The banks were covered with luxuriant undergrowth, with here and there upstanding birches, aspens, ashes, wild cherry trees, and willows; all entwined by wreaths of wild hops, which waved their golden tassels from the topmost twigs. And there grew long succulent grass, dotted with countless flowering shrubs, fragrant clover, scarlet gilliflowers, Turk's Cap lilies, and valerian. The Buguruslan flows through a valley. On each side rise mountains, now steep, now softly swelling, here approaching the stream, and there retreating far into the distance. In those days each slope and cliff of the heights was clothed with linden woods. On climbing the hills you entered the immeasurable, immense solitude of the steppe, where the rich black soil lay a yard deep. On the river banks. and in the surrounding marshes all manner of water fowlducks, snipe, and wild geese—had their nests, and filled the air with cries and screams. But high above, from the mountainous

tableland there resounded over the valley the thousand voices of the birds of the steppes, which had their habitation in these lofty altitudes—bustards, cranes, crested snipes, heathcocks, and hawks. The river teemed with fish of every sort that could exist in its icy waters: pike, perch, carp, even salmon and salmon-trout. On every hand forest and steppe were rich in wild life: in short, it was and is, even now, a blessed land. My grandfather bought some five thousand dessiatines 1 of land for which he paid a price, which at the time appeared incredibly high: half a rouble per dessiatine. Two thousand five hundred roubles were a considerable sum in those days. After the purchase was concluded and duly ratified, Stepan Michailovitsch returned—well content and in high spirits to his anxious family in his native Province of Simbirsk; and set to work with all haste to make the necessary preparations for the transport of his peasants. This was a pretty difficult business on account of the length of the journey, for the distance between the Troizkoie estate and the newly-acquired property was not less than four hundred versts. It was only in the autumn of that year that twenty labourers arrived at Buguruslan, bringing ploughs, harrows, and seed troughs. In certain carefully-selected spots they broke up the virgin soil and sowed twenty dessiatines of the lightly-ploughed land with winter seed; they likewise prepared another twenty dessiatines for the summer sowing; erected a few huts, and returned home. Towards the end of the winter another twenty men wended their way towards the new estate, and, as spring was awakening, they sowed the summer seed in the readyploughed twenty dessiatines, enclosed the courtyard and stables with wicker fences, built clay stoves in the huts, and then returned to Simbirsk, for they were not amongst the men selected for the new settlement. These latter had remained at home, preparing for the removal, and had been engaged in disposing of superfluous cattle and grain, huts. sheds, and implements. And at last-towards mid-June, about Saint Peter's Day, (O.S.) the time of the hay-harvest -the emigrants set out, escorting their heavily-laden wagons, packed with all manner of farming gear, on top of which were perched women, children, and old folks, sheltered

¹ Dessiatine—a Russian measure of land=2-7 English acres. [Tr.]

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alike from storm or sun by canopies of woven strips of bark. Above their heads poultry screamed and cackled; and the cattle, tied at the cart tail, plodded patiently behind.

What bitter tears these poor peasants shed, as they quitted their old homes for ever—the church where they had been baptised and wedded, and the graves of their fathers and forefathers! Of all mankind the Russian peasant is he who most abhors emigration: but in those times such an exodus towards a distant and heathenish land, where amongst much that was good, so much more evil was related—where the church was so far away that a man might die any day, unabsolved; and where children perforce must remain for months unbaptised, the prospect was something hideous to contemplate.

My grandfather followed the serfs almost immediately. He gave the name of Snamenskoie to the newly-founded village, and vowed, in the fulness of time and when his circumstances would permit, to build a church and dedicate it to the Miraculous Apparition, which festival is celebrated on the 27th November, [O.S.]. This vow was fulfilled in later years by his son. But the peasants, and, following the example of these, the neighbours all called the settlement New-Bagrovo, after my grandfather's own name, and in remembrance of the old Bagrovo. To this day the place is only known by the latter name—the other only exists in the ancient deed of purchase, and no one in the neighbourhood dreams that this beautiful estate, with its noble, white stone church and stately manor-house, is in reality called Snamenskoie.

My grandfather himself superintended the field labour untiringly—the peasants' allotments as well as his own fields. The hay was cut and carried in good time: the summer and winter corn reaped, and stored ready to be threshed. The harvest was incredible—fabulous. The peasants took heart. By November all the huts were ready for occupation, and a beautiful, little manor-house had been built. It is true that all this progress owed not a little to the friendly assistance of the neighbours, who in spite of immense distances, came to help their genial and shrewd

¹ This festival commemorates the Apparition of the Saviour to the Virgin Mary after His Resurrection and is celebrated in the Greek Church. [Tr.]

fellow-settler. They enjoyed his liberal hospitality, and went to work singing their native songs most lustily. When winter came, my grandfather returned to the Simbirsk estate, and brought away his family. During the following year it was a simple matter for him to introduce another forty men, and to accommodate them quite comfortably and economically. My grandfather's next task was to build a mill, as for lack of one it had hitherto been necessary to send the grain a distance of forty versts to be ground. So a suitable spot was chosen, where the water was not too deep, where the ground was solid, and the river bank of a good height and very firm: and there was erected on each side of the water a bank of earth and brush wood, after the fashion of a pair of hands about to clasp one another. This embankment was farther strengthened by a covering of interlaced willow boughs. All that remained to be done now, was to imprison the wildly-rushing stream in its appointed basin. The mill itself was already built on the lower bank; with its two millstones and crushing gear complete. The water was to be conducted through great wooden pipes and might then dash against the huge mill wheels, when, checked by the dam, it had found its level, filled the wide pond, and risen above the bottom of the lock. When all was ready, and four mighty oaken posts had been driven firmly into the clayey bed of the Buguruslan, my grandfather bespoke his neighbours' help for two days, bidding them bring horses, carts, axes, pitchforks, and shovels. On the first day great masses of straw, brushwood, dung, and turf were piled on each bank of the Buguruslan, which still flowed unchecked, and undisturbed. At sunrise on the second day, nearly a hundred men assembled for the damming of the river.

Every face wore an expression of concentrated and even solemn expectancy. There had been no sleep in the village during the night. At a given signal, and at the same moment, loud cheers were raised, and from each bank great masses of brushwood and bundles of faggots were hurled into the river bed. Much of this was instantly whirled away by the current, but a considerable portion was checked and held by the stakes, and settled on the sandy bottom. Bundles of straw, weighted by stones, followed the brushwood, and after that

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came dung and clay; a layer of brushwood next, more straw and dung; and, over the whole, a heavy stratum of sods. As soon as the mass began to appear above the surface of the water, twenty nimble and hardy fellows sprang upon the rapidly-rising barrier, and set to work to stamp it firmly down. All this work was executed with such speed, such zeal, and above all, with such a terrible racket, that any passer-byhearing the uproar, and not knowing what it was all aboutmight very well have been frightened out of his wits. But in these parts were no wayfarers to be terrified. Only the wild steppes and the darkling woods resounded to the excited shouts of the hundred labourers—to whose voices were added the shrill trebles of a crowd of women and children, for everyone took a hand in the great work; and all screamed and shrieked in the greatest excitement. It was no light task to restrain the impetuous stream, which continually burst its way through the rising dam, sweeping away straw and branches, dung and sods. But victory was on the side of Man. No longer could the water escape through the stout barrier. The flood paused, as if in doubt; and filling the whole river gorge, rose over the banks, overflowed into the meadows, and by evening lay—a wide shining lake—unconfined by bank or hedge, and dotted here and there by upstanding clumps of trees. The very next day the mill started stamping and grinding—and grinds and stamps to the present time.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ORENBURG

Oh Heavens, how beautiful must this land have been in its first wild, virgin luxuriance! But thou art no longer the same as in those long-vanished days, nor even the same known to my childhood, ere thy verdant blossoming plains were riven by the ploughs of the gaily-dressed peasants who invaded thee from every side! Oh, Orenburg, thou art indeed still fair and wide—full of luxuriance, and endless variety—but no longer the same! Thy name is changed, and sounds strangely in mine ears! Whence, in Heaven's name

comes this "burg"? When first I learned to love thee blessed land, thy name was Ufa.

Dear land! with gifts beyond all measure By Nature's kindly hand bestrown—
Henceforth thy plains' and pastures' treasure Not for the herdsman bloom alone!
Scarce can I tell thy face of old
From every region, every place
Come eager crowds of alien race;
And, with their skilful hands and bold,
They fell the forest, check the stream,
Clouding its pure and azure gleam.

Their picks on mountain sides resound, Where veins of noble metal lurk: And dazzling crystals heap the ground, Where they the seething salt springs work. With scanty labour—scanty toil The stranger for his children gains A hundred-fold the sowers' pains—So inexhaustible thy soil. Far o'er the Steppe wild creatures flee, And seek the forest's sanctuary.

Thus wrote one of thine own sons, thirty years later. And all this has in part been fulfilled—and the rest will vet befall thee—vet still art thou beautiful, land of enchantment! Thy lakes-Kandry and Karatabyn-slumber deep and murmurous as vast pearl shells. Thy rushing rivers, rich in fish, foam and dash through the gorges and valleys of the terraced slopes of the Ural Mountains; or softly meander through the billowing steppes like strings of sapphire beads. Marvellous are these rivers of the steppes. with their countless, deep, lake-like pools-or when they can only be traced by the merest thread of a streamlet. Trout of stately size and most delicate flavour lurk in every pool of thy impetuous welling streams—clear as crystal, and cold as ice even in the sultriest days of summer-which gush forth from beneath the shady trees and bushes, and ripple joyously along. The fish vanish like flashes of light, when the unclean hand of man disturbs the virgin current of their cool, sequestered dwelling. Thy pastures and meadows glow with luxuriant. verdure, shimmering milky-white in spring-time with the bloom of cherry and peach trees, and the white carpet of wild

 $^{^{1}}$ The Author himself. [Note by Ivan Aksakov, one of the Author's sons.]

strawberries: and glowing red in summer with the spicy strawberries and the little cherries, which wax darker as they ripen in the autumn. Richest recompense rewards the indolent, unskilful labour of thy sons, as they rend thy rich soil with their uncouth ploughs! Thy vast linden forests clothe themselves in their green robes, while swarms of wild bees fill their waxen cells with fragrant honey, culled from the bloom of the lime tree. Here, amid the forests where the Ufa and Bielaia have their source, dwells the Ufa marten -most highly-prized of his race. Friendly and peaceful are the wandering tribes of Bashkirs; thine own primeval. patriarchal children. Though scantier than of yore, great herds of horses, and vast numbers of kine and sheep still are thine... The stern wild winter has departed, and with the first warm beams of Spring sunshine the famished Bashkirs. meagre as flies in winter, lead the remnant of their herds to feast on the earliest fresh grass already springing up on the open steppe—and wife and child accompany each man. Yet a week or two, and neither man nor beast is to be recognised. The skeleton horses are fiery, untameable steeds—each mighty stallion the jealous guardian of the feeding-ground of his mares, and intolerant of any intrusion thereon. withered cows are stout and strong—their udders dripping with perfumed milk. But the Bashkir reckons little of the rich cows' milk—already the wholesome Koumis¹ is prepared, it has been fermented in the horse-hide bag, and each who will—babe or infirm elder—drink to intoxication of the life-giving beverage. The sufferings of famine-stricken winter vanish like magic; even the wrinkled sunken features of the aged fill out, and a healthy red flush replaces the sickly pallor of their cheeks. But sad and strange are the deserted villages! To any casual traveller in these parts, who has never seen the like before, the sight of the empty housessilent as the grave—is terrifying. Wild and sorrowful are the scattered Yourts,2 with their whitened chimneys, and gaping window frames, from which the bladders have been removed, like faces with the eyes put out. Here and there bays a

An alcoholic drink made from fermented mares' milk. This milk is very rich in sugar. [Tr. S. R.]

Bashkirian huts, which in winter have bladders fixed in the window frames instead of panes of glass. [Tr. S. R.]

chained and famished dog, at long intervals fed and tended by his master; here wails a half-wild deserted cat, seeking a scanty living. A little farther—and nothing stirs—all human traces vanish. . . .

But how picturesque and unique are the three regions of the Province now, the steppes, the forests, and the mountains . . . above all, the mountain lands, the outposts of the Urals-so rich in metals-the gold-fields of Russia! What a vast extent from the frontiers of the Provinces of Perm and Viatka, (where the quicksilver frequently freezes). to the little town of Guriev on the borders of the Province of Astrachan; where tiny grapes thrive in the open air, producing a wine which cools in summer, warms in wintera stock-in-trade for the native Cossacks. What glorious fishing in the Urals! Unique indeed, both as regards the capture of the abundant Red Fish,1 and their excellent flavour when caught. This singular mode of fishing is known as Bagrenie, and still awaits a vivid and accurate description, such as might well excite universal interest in the sport. But methinks I have already written far too much about my beloved home. We shall now see how my energetic grandather lived and worked in his new sphere.

THE NEW HOME

How good it seemed to Stepan Michailovitsch, and how often he crossed himself in the fulness of his joy, when at last he was settled on the wide plains of the Buguruslan. The increasing gaiety of his heart was only equalled by his improved health and increased strength. No favours asked, nor reproaches uttered—no quarrels, nor tears! No Vojeikovs no Moschenskis, no Suschtschevs! No thefts of wood, and no damage done to forest, field, or crops! His sway extended—not over his own land alone, but far, far beyond it—over the wilds! To the herdsman might he grant permission to pasture his flocks, and give the woodman

All the larger-sized sturgeons are called Red Fish.
 The names of my grandfather's neighbours in Simbirsk.

leave to cut down trees-or mow the steppe for hay-just as he willed: and no man questioned his authority! The peasants soon grew reconciled to their new home, and grew to love it. How, indeed, could they have done otherwise? From the arid, wooded estate of Troizkoie-where the pasturage was so scanty, that each peasant's family found it hard work to maintain a single horse and cow: where the oncefruitful ground had been so tilled and cultivated from remotest times, that it was now fairly exhausted—they found themselves transferred to boundless and fertile plains, as yet untouched by plough or scythe. Here, they were in the neighbourhood of a clear and sparkling river, with a multitude of tributary streams and springs; and near the banks of a limpid pool, where the mill stood close at hand; while in the old days they were forced to drag their sacks of corn along a weary stretch of twenty-five versts to be ground; and frequently had to wait a couple of days until their turn came for grinding. You will wonder why I have described Troizkoie as arid. Had my ancestors indeed been so imprudent as to set up their dwelling in a barren country? Not so, for a different state of things existed formerly, and no reproach attaches to my forebears. Troizkoie once lay situated on the beautiful little stream of the Maina, that, three versts distant from the village, took its rise in the wonderful Mossy Lakes. Moreover, beside the village lay a narrow, but long and clear pond, deep in the centre, whose bed was of the whitest sand: out of this pond flowed a brook, called the White Brook. Of course this was ages and ages ago. According to the tradition. the Mossy Lakes were formerly deep round basins in the depth of the forest, filled with transparent icy water and surrounded by marshy banks. At that time, so the tale goes, no one had ever dared to approach the lakes, except in winter time: for the quaking banks would instantly swallow up the venturesome intruder who had dared invade the realm of the Water-Devil. But the Will of Man triumphed over Nature. Folks ceased to attach any credence to the old tale, which failed, as time went on, to give any proof of its miraculous power—and the Mossy Lakes grew foul through the soaking of flax, and the watering of cattle. As the surrounding forest was cut down, they became smaller and shallower. A thick layer of peaty moss grew upon their surface, whereon sprung

up many sorts of grasses whose matted roots constituted a certain amount of solidity. Soon thick cushions of moss and bushes appeared, and lastly a tolerably vigorous, young pinesapling forest. One basin is now completely overgrown, and only two huge, deep holes remain of the other, which are best avoided, for their margin—weighted with its growth of herbage bushes, and saplings-quakes and wavers like a quicksand under the traveller's footstep. As the result of the dwindling of the Mossy Lakes, the main part of the Maina rivulet has been lost, and now only makes its first appearance some versts beyond the village. The deep, clear, long pond has been metamorphosed into a stinking slough. Its sandy bed is fathom-deep with slime; and its surface is covered with filth and refuse from the peasants' barnyards. The last trace of the White Brook has long since vanished, and soon its very name will be forgotten....

Scarcely had my grandfather established himself in his new surroundings than, with his characteristic energy and perseverance, he set himself to work on agriculture, and cattle breeding. The peasants, encouraged by his example, developed into willing and skilful labourers, and soon nothing remained to be done in the building or carpentering line. The threshing-floor of New-Bagrovo occupied an area three times the size of the village itself; and the magnificent herds of horses, cattle, and swine, and flocks of sheep bore striking witness to the wealth of the new settler. It really seemed as if Stepan Michailovitsch had set the fashion of emigration; for a stream of folks flowed into Ufa and Orenburg. From all sides came the Steppe Mordvins, Tscheremisses, Tschuvasches. Tartars, and Meschtcheriaks: nor was there any lack of Russian emigrants, of Crown Peasants from various districts. and of more or less well-to-do owners of serfs. My grandfather soon had neighbours. His brother-in-law, Ivan Nasilievitsch Neklyudov, purchased a tract of land twenty versts distant from New-Bagrovo, transferred his serfs to this estate. built a wooden church, called the place Neklyudovo, and established himself there with his family—a circumstance by no means pleasing to my grandfather. For he detested all his wife's relations—the whole Neklyudovery, as he called them. A landed proprietor-Bachmetev-bought an estate

still nearer at hand, only about ten versts from Bagrovo, near the source of the Sovruscha, which flows parallel with the Buguruslan in the South-East. He brought along his serfs, and called his place Bachmetevka. On the other side, on the banks of the Nasjagai (or Motschagai, as the natives now call this river) lay the demesne of Polibino, which is now the property of the Karainzins. The Nasjagai is wider and more beautiful than the Buguruslan; deeper and more full of fish; and aquatic birds are found in greater abundance on its shores. On the road to Polibino, eight versts from Bagrovo, and lying directly to the East, is the big Mordvin village of Noikino. Two versts farther on, a mill was built on the Bokla, a stream which flows parallel to the Buguruslan towards the South. Not far from this mill the Bokla joins the Nasjagai. which whirls its mighty current from North-East to South-West. Seventeen versts from New-Bagrovo our own Buguruslan is drawn into the flood, which, strengthened by this new volume of water, finally unites itself with the Kinel, thereby losing its sonorous and significant name.1

In the end, quite a little Mordvin village grew up under the name of Kiwazkoie, only two versts away from Bagrovo, but farther towards Buguruslan. Stepan Michailovitsch at first was somewhat inclined to pull a long face at such near neighbours, who reminded him of the old days at Troizkoie. But the case was different here. These were decent, quiet folk, who never caused the slightest trouble to my grandfather in his capacity of District Inspector. In a few years my grandfather had gained the love and respect of the whole country side. He was a true benefactor to all, far and near; old and new neighbours; especially to the latest comers, who, as is so frequently the case with emigrants, came poor and empty-handed into a strange land; frequently unprovided with seed, corn, and with no money to buy any. To all such my grandfather's bursting granaries lay open. you need: and if the first harvest yields enough and to spare, you can repay me. If not-accept it as a gift in God's name." With such words as these my grandfather shared his store generously with those who lacked corn or bread. And here let me add, that, with all this, he was so clear-sighted, so

¹ Nasjagai means "Swift Pursuer". [Tr. S. R.]

charitable, and sympathised so heartily with all in need and want; and kept his plighted word and promise so faithfully and constantly—that he came to be a veritable oracle in those parts. And not only a friend in the day of distress was he; but an adviser and a prudent guide to all who needed advice. Only tell him the plain truth, and his assistance might be reckoned upon. But those who had lied to him to excite his compassion, were well advised never to shew themselves on his land again. They would get nothing more, and well for them if they escaped with whole skins. Many a family quarrel was healed by him—many a lawsuit nipped in the bud. From every part of the country people sought him out for advice and arbitration: and his decision was respected, and observed to the uttermost degree. I have known grandsons and even great-grandsons of that bygone generation, who have testified their gratitude and indebtedness to the firm and just decisions of Stepan Michailovitsch, as handed down to them by their fathers and grandfathers. To many a simple, but strangely moving story have I listened, and the narrator at the end would cross himself, and pray for the repose of the soul of Stepan Michailovitsch. Small wonder then, that the peasants had a genuine affection for such a master; but this affection was equally shared by the house servants, who frequently had to bear the brunt of his ungovernable outbursts of passion. In years to come, many an ancient servitor of my grandfather ended his days under my roof; and often have these old men -while tears rained down their cheeks-spoken lovingly to me of their choleric, but generous and just old master.

And this noble, magnanimous, often self-restrained man—whose actual character presented an image of the loftiest human nature—was subject to fits of rage in which he was capable of most barbarous cruelty. I recollect having seen him in one of these mad fits in my earliest childhood [at a much later date than that of the foregoing narrative]. I see him now. He was angry with one of his daughters, who had lied to him, and persisted in the lie. There he stood, supported between two servants, for his legs refused their office; I could hardly recognise him as my grandfather: he trembled in every limb, his features were distorted, and the frenzy of rage glared from his enraged eyes. "Give her to me!" he howled

in a strangled voice. (All this remains clearly in my memory; what came later has often been related to me). My grandmother threw herself at his feet, beseeching him to have pity and forbearance, but the next instant off flew her kerchief and cap, and Stepan Michailovitsch seized his corpulent and already aged better half by the hair of her head. Meanwhile, the culprit as well as all her sisters—and even her brother, with his young wife and little son-had fled into the woods behind the house; and there they remained all night: only the young daughter-in-law crept home with the child, fearing he might take cold, and slept with him in the servants' quarters. My grandfather raved and stormed about the empty house to his heart's content. At last he grew too tired to drag his poor old Arina Vasilievna about by her plaits, and fell exhausted upon his bed, where a deep sleep overpowered him, which lasted until the following morning. He awoke calm, and in a good humour, and called to his Arischa in a cheery tone. My grandmother immediately ran to him from the adjoining chamber, just as if nothing had happened the day before. "Give me some tea! Where are the children? Where are Alexei and his wife? Bring little Sergei to me!" said this erstwhile lunatic, now that he had slept off his rage; and everyone—with the exception of the daughter-in-law and her son-made their appearance with bright and serene countenances. This daughter-in-law was a woman of strong character, and no entreaties would induce her to betake herself so promptly to the madman of vesterday, and greet him civilly: and the child kept crying: "I won't go near my grandfather! I'm afraid of him!"

As she really was not very well, she pleaded indisposition, and kept her son with her in her own apartments. All held a terrified council, and awaited a fresh storm. But the man had conquered the wild beast of the previous evening. After Stepan Michailovitsch had drunk his tea, and chatted amicably with his children, he went himself to visit the young wife, who was in fact in a very shattered condition, and lay, pale and exhausted, on her bed. The old man seated himself beside her, kissed and embraced her, called her dear, beautiful little girl; caressed his little grandson, and at last left the room saying he felt lonely without his beloved daughter-in-

law. Half an hour later the door of my grandfather's room was gently opened, and in walked his daughter-in-law, elegantly dressed in a gown which the old gentleman had once declared became her better than anything else in her wardrobe. My grandfather was much touched. "What's this?" he said tenderly, "My poor, sick little daughter has got up and dressed in spite of her illness, and come to cheer up the old man!" The mother-in-law and her daughters, who could not endure the young wife, cast down their eyes and bit their lips, while she responded gaily and respectfully to the friendly greeting of her father-in-law, and cast a glance of sly triumph at her maleyolent relations. . . .

But enough of the darker side of my grandfather's character. I prefer to describe one of his cheery happy days, of which I have heard so much.

ONE OF STEPAN MICHAILOVITSCH'S GOOD DAYS

The end of June was at hand, and already the heat was intense. After a sweltering night, a cool East wind had sprung up as the dawn broke, which gradually fell as the sun's rays grew more powerful. My grandfather awoke at sunrise. It had grown too hot for him to remain asleep any longer in the narrow space within the bed hangings of homespun linen. even with the old-fashioned window opened to its fullest extent. Without the bed curtains he would have been persecuted by the irrepressible mosquitoes, and would never have had an instant's sleep. These winged musicians came in veritable swarms, thrust their long rapiers through any thin barrier, and buzzed and hummed their persistent song from night-fall to dawn. However strange it may sound to you. I must here confess that I love the shrill soprano, and even the bite, of the mosquito. It awakens memories of those glowing summers of long past days—with their wondrous, sleepless nights, echoing with the song of countless nightingales on the wooded banks of the Buguruslan: I can feel the yearning throbbing of my young heart, and that eternal, sweetest melancholy of youth, for which I would now willingly barter all my later existence. . . .

My grandfather was awake. With his hot hand he wiped the drops from his forehead, thrust his head through the curtains, and laughed aloud. His two body-servants, Vanka Masan and Nikanor Tanaitschenok, lay upon the floor, in grotesque abandon and snored as if for a wager. "How these sons of dogs do snore, to be sure!" said my grandfather, and laughed again. In truth Stepan Michailovitsch was a puzzle. After such a remark, one might have expected him to administer a hearty blow with the willow staff which always stood at the head of his bed-or a good kick-or an early morning compliment in the way of a bang with a chair: but my grandfather had woken up with a laugh, and for the rest of that day was sure to be in a good humour. He got out of bed very quietly, crossed himself a couple of times, thrust his bare feet into his fox-skin slippers, and stepped out upon the balcony staircase, clad only in his homespun linen shirt-(his wife would never permit him to wear fine shirts)—where the damp morning breeze blew refreshingly. I have just remarked that Arina Vasilievna would never let her husband have any fine linen shirts, and the reader may with perfect justice retort that the characters of the two old married folks hardly bear out such a statement. All I can say is, that it was so. Here, as in every like case, the will of the woman triumphed finally over that of the man! In spite of all my grandfather's grumbling over the coarse linen, my grandmother took her own way, and supplied him with nothing else, until he grew quite accustomed to wearing it. indeed my grandfather had recourse to a last desperate expedient. He took an axe and hacked all his coarse shirts to rags, and strewed the bits on the door-sill of his roomheedless of my grandmother's lamentations, as she wildly entreated him to scold her as much as he liked, if he would only spare his own property. But even this frantic act availed him not. New and coarser shirts came to light, and the old man had to confess himself beaten. . . .

But I must crave the reader's pardon: in my wish to entertain him with the story of my grandfather's shirts I have wandered away from my history of his happy day. Without awakening anyone, he unhooked one of the felt curtains from the wall, spread it on the topmost step of the

outside staircase or flier, 1 and seated himself, as was his wont, to await the sunrise. This awaiting the sunrise was an especial delight of my grandfather's, and his enjoyment was enhanced by the sight of his courtyard, which even in those days was well equipped with numerous buildings. It is true the court was not enclosed; and the peasants' cattle, when assembled in a herd ready for driving out to pasture, came in to forage each morning or evening, as the case might be. Sundry far-from-clean pigs were rubbing themselves against the very staircase where my grandfather was seated, grunting and gobbling away at the crawfish shells and other scraps of food which littered the foot of the steps; cows and sheep wandered up to the door, and naturally left unsightly traces of their visit behind them. But things of this sort did not disturb my grandfather's serenity in the least; on the contrary he rejoiced at the sight of so many beautiful animals, which bore witness to the prosperity of his peasantry. Soon however the resounding crack of the herdsman's whip caused these early visitors to make off with all speed. . . . The household began to bestir itself. Spiridon, the stalwart groom, known to the end of his long life as Spirka, brought out three gallant stallions, one after the other; two being roans and the other a black-brown: each of these he tied to a post, rubbed him down, and then exercised him by lounging him with a rope, while my grandfather admired their shape and size with great complacency, and already in imagination saw the splendid race of horses which he hoped they would breed for him, which indeed eventually came to pass. The old housekeeper, who preferred to sleep in the cellar, roused herself, and wended her way to the banks of the Buguruslan to perform her morning toilette, sighed and groaned according to her invariable custom, repeated her prayers, turned towards the East, and set to work scrubbing, washing and rinsing her pots and pans. Swallows darted, twittering, through the air. The meadows resounded with the rattle of the corncrake; and the song of the lark echoed high above in the clouds; in the bushes the hoarse cries of the ring-quail vied with the piping of the water hens, and the tremulous clack of the wood-

 $^{^1}$ A $^{\prime\prime}$ flier $^{\prime\prime}$ is an outside gallery or balcony with a staircase leading to the ground. [Tr.]

cocks in the adjacent marsh. . . . the nightingale paused in his song, and the mocking bird took up the refrain. sun's glory streamed from the heavens . . . smoke arose from the peasants' huts, and these azure columns wavered in the breeze like the unfurled flags of a procession of boats on a river . . . the peasants set out for the fields. My grandfather, being minded to perform his ablutions with cold water, and to drink his tea, was obliged to disturb his two servants, who still snored peacefully in their inelegant attitudes. They sprang up in terror, but Stepan Michailovitsch's cheery voice soon reassured them: "Masan, my washing water! Tanaitschenok, wake Aksiutka and the mistress, and make the tea!" It was not necessary to speak twice. Off dashed the clumsy Masan headlong to the well, with the glittering copper waterjug in his hand; while the nimbler Tanaitschenok roused the extremely ill-favoured young maid. Aksiutka; who, hastily setting her handkerchief to rights on her head, scampered off to shake her stout old mistress out of her comfortable slumbers. In a very few minutes the whole house was astir, and everyone knew that the old master was in a good humour. A quarter of an hour later a table, covered with a white homespun linen cloth, was set out on the balcony, on which stood the steaming samovar, presided over by Aksiutka: and the old mistress Arina Vasilievna greeted her husband-not with groans and sighs, (as often was her wont in order to protect herself from his ill humour)—but cheerfully and brightly, while she asked after his health and what he had dreamt about. For his part, my grandfather spoke kindly to his Arischa as he called her. He never would kiss her hand, but frequently gave her his own to kiss, as a mark of special favour. Arina Vasilievna positively blushed with pleasure at his compliments, and even seemed to grow younger. Her unwieldiness and corpulence were not nearly so noticeable. She lost no time in bringing a stool out on the balcony and seating herself on it beside my grandfather, a thing she never would have ventured to do unless assured of his good humour. "Shall we drink our tea together, Arischa", said Stepan Michailovitsch, "while the morning is cool? The night was certainly terribly hot, but I slept so soundly that I cannot remember any of my dreams. And you?" An enquiry like

this was such an extraordinary piece of civility that my grandmother hastened to reply that she always slept very soundly whenever Michailovitsch had a good night: Tania,1 however, had had a very bad night. Tania was the youngest daughter, and the old man loved her more than all the others, as is so frequently the case. He was quite concerned to hear this, and gave orders that Tatiana was not to be awakened, in order that she should get her full amount of sleep. However Tatiana had already been awakened at the same time as her sisters Alexandra and Jelisaveta, and was already up and dressed: but no one ventured to tell her father this. Tania undressed hastily, slipped into bed again, had the shutters closed, and remained for two hours lying in the dark, although she was quite unable to sleep: my grandfather, however, imagined she was having a sound sleep to make up for that lost during the night. His only son, who at that time was nine years old, was never awakened early. The elder sisters were not long in making their appearance, and Stepan Michailovitsch, giving each his hand to kiss, called them by their pet names, Leksania and Lisynka. Both were clever girls. Alexandra joined to a subtle intellect the lively irritability of her father, without, however, possessing any of his good nature. My grandmother was an extremely weak-minded woman, who was entirely ruled by her daughters: whenever she ventured, (as she sometimes did) to deceive her husband. it was always at the instigation of these girls; and she lied so unskilfully that she, as often as not, failed to carry her point. The old fellow was perfectly aware of this, and he also knew that his daughters never missed an opportunity of lying to him. Out of indolence and indifference, or when he was in a good humour, he sometimes led them to believe that he did not see through their tricks. But, at the first explosion of rage, out flashed his relentless animosity, and he would rate them soundly. However the girls, as became true daughters of Eve, were never discouraged: the storm once past and their father's face cleared, they set to work again to carry out their artful designs, in which they generally succeeded.

After he had finished drinking his tea, and had chatted cheerily with his wife and daughters, my grandfather

¹ Pet name for Tatiana. [Tr. H. R.]

prepared to set out on the round of the estate. Masan had received orders some time back to have the horse put in, and already the old brown gelding stood at the foot of the balcony steps, harnessed to a comfortable and commodious peasant's cart. The groom Spiridon sat in front as driver, simply dressed in a blouse, bare-footed, and wearing a red woollen scarf girded round his waist, from which hung his keys and his copper comb. On a former occasion Spiridon had set out on one of these expeditions wearing no hat, and my grandfather having scolded him for this, he now wore a queer sort of cap on his head manufactured out of wide strips of linden bark woven together. My grandfather burst out laughing at the sight of this remarkable head-gear, as he drew on his own country coat of unbleached, homespun linen, and put on his cap. In case of a shower, he threw his overcoat on the seat and climbed into the cart. Spiridon likewise had brought his overcoat, which was made of common peasants' cloth, but dyed a brilliant red with madder, plant which grew in great profusion in our fields. This red dye was so popular among our peasantry that the neighbours gave the nickname of "The Reds" to the Bagrovian serfs. Fifty years after my grandfather's death I recollect hearing them called by this name. Once out in the fields, Stepan Michailovitsch was pleased with everything he saw. He looked at the blooming rye, which stood erect, the height of a man, in a solid wall. A soft wind rustled in the ears of corn, which rose and fell in gently-swelling, bluish waves-now lighter, now darker, as the sun's rays caught its undulations. Such a crop was a veritable joy for the owner's eye. My grandfather visited the fields of young oats, the spelt-wheat, and what remained standing of the summer harvest. From thence they went to the fallow land where they drove slowly over the ploughedup ground in every direction. This was my grandfather's invariable custom, in order to test the accuracy of the ploughing. Every clod of earth, every rough patch untouched by the plough, gave the lightly-hung cart a jerk; and were my grandfather out of humour, he promptly leant out and made a hole in the ground with his staff; sent for the farm-bailiff, unless indeed the latter happened to be accompanying him, and called him over the coals, there and then. To-day every-

thing went off splendidly. Even when the cart bumped over a few stray lumps Stepan Michailovitsch either noticed nothing, or did not choose to notice. He gave a look over his beautiful Steppe meadows and revelled in the sight of the lush, rich grass, that would be ready for the scythe in a day or two. And he also spent a considerable time in the peasants' fields, observing for himself whose corn was in good, and whose in bad condition: he tested their ploughed land; saw everything and forgot nothing. Driving over a waste bit of land, he noticed some ripe strawberries, and, with Masan's assistance, picked quite a good basketful of splendid fruit for his Arischa. In spite of the heat, his round lasted until nearly twelve o'clock. . . . Scarcely had his cart been seen in the distance than dinner was steaming on the table, and all the family were assembled on the balcony awaiting his arrival. "Well, Arischa," he said, in high good humour, "God has indeed blessed us this year with a glorious harvest! Great is His goodness! And here are a few strawberries for you." My grandmother beamed with pleasure. "Half the strawberries are ripe already," he continued, "and we must begin to pick them to-morrow." And saying thus, he marched into the ante-room. The good smell of cabbage soup was wafted to him from the dining room. "Ah, dinner laid already!" he said gaily: "this is good, indeed!" and without going to his own room he went straight to the dining hall, and sat down at the table. I must explain that my grandfather's explicit orders were, that at whatever time he might return from the fields, dinner must be ready on the table. And woe if he returned unobserved, and the midday meal was not served. Such neglect frequently had tragical results. on this happy day everything went smoothly; no untoward event occurred to disturb my grand sire's equanimity. A lusty fellow, Nikolka Rusan, placed himself behind the old man's chair, and whisked the flies away with a long birchen bough. My grandfather ate his steaming cabbage soupwhich a true Russian relishes even in the hottest weather |with a wooden spoon, as he feared to burn his mouth with a silver one: next came an iced Batvinia; salted sturgeon. as yellow as beeswax; shelled crawfish, and light dishes of

the same sort. Home-brewed beer and iced kvass 1 were drunk. The meal was very merry. All talked and chattered at the same time, and laughed and joked. There were days. however, when dinner was eaten in gloomy silence, and in expectation of an explosion. . . . Somehow or other all the young people of the household had got to know that the old master was in a particularly good temper, and in they all came, pushing their way into the dining room, in the hope of getting a few stray bits from the meal. My grandfather shared every dish generously with his folk, and as there was about five times as much food on the table as he and his family could eat, there was plenty to spare. Directly after dinner he went to bed. All the flies were chased from under the bed canopy, and as soon as my grandfather lay down, the curtains were drawn all round the bed and fastened together under the mattress. And very soon loud snores announced that the master of the house was wrapped in deepest slumber. Everyone scattered in different directions; some decided to have a rest, too, Masan and Tanaitschenok stretched themselves on the floor of the antechamber outside my grandfather's door, but not until they had devoured as much of the remains of the dinner as they could secure. Although they had both slept during the forenoon, they were quite ready for another nap. But the intense heat of the sunbeams streaming through the window panes fell full upon them, and soon woke them up again. Their uncomfortable nap had made them excessively thirsty, and feeling a great inclination to cool their parched throats with some of the ice-cold beer reserved for the "quality," the saucy knaves devised the following cunning plan. . . Just at the entrance to my grandfather's room his dressing gown and night-cap lay on a chair, and it was a quite simple matter to stretch one's hand through the half-opened door, and secure them. Having done so. Tanaitschenok proceeded to array himself in his master's costume, and seated himself outside on the balcony, while Masan hurried down to the cellar with the beer jug, woke up the old housekeeper--who, like all the rest of the household, was fast asleep—and imperatively demanded iced beer for

¹ A sour fermented drink, made from black bread and malt. [Tr. T. R.]

the master. As the old woman demurred, saying that it was impossible that the master should be awake so early in the afternoon, Masan begged her to step outside, which she didand having duly observed his friend Tanaitschenok perched aloft, disguised in my grandfather's cap and bed-gown, she filled the jug with beer without farther ado, added some lumps of ice, and gave it to Masan, who ran off with his booty. The beer was shared in all brotherly love, and the night clothes carefully replaced on the chair. . . . A good hour elapsed before the master awoke. He sprang up in a vet gaver mood than in the early morning, and his first words were: "Cold beer!"... Consternation reigned! Tanaitschenok hastened once more to the cellar-dame, who instantly guessed what had become of the first jug of beer. She said nothing, however, but refilled the vessel, and brought it herself to the balcony where, this time, the real master, crowned with his night-cap, was sitting. In a very few words she described the trick played upon her; while Masan and Tanaitschenok, trembling with fear, threw themselves at their master's feet. And what did my grandfather? He roared with laughter, sent for his wife and daughters, and related the servants' ruse to them amid fresh bursts of merriment. The two poor devils breathed again, but one of them was so ill-advised as to laugh too. In an instant Stepan Michailovitsch stopped laughing, and glared at him, ready to burst into a rage: but the sweet influence of the happy day was still strong enough to chase the momentary scowl from his brow, and he merely remarked in a severe tone: "This time I forgive you; but another time" it was not necessary to finish the sentence. . . .

You may well be surprised at the servants of such a passionate—and occasionally even violent and cruel—master, daring to play such a trick. Nevertheless I have frequently observed that it is precisely the servants of the severest masters, who take the greatest liberties. The foregoing occurrence was by no means the only specimen of its kind which took place in my grandfather's house; for that very same Vanka Masan, while sweeping out his master's room one day, took a fancy to have a nap in the beautiful white bed, promptly lay down therein, and fell asleep! Some time

later my grandfather discovered him in this posture—and only laughed. He certainly gave him a good thump with his willow staff but merely out of amusement and surprise. But many worse tricks than these of the poor servants were played on my grandfather. For instance, the case where his fourteen-year-old cousin, Praskovia Ivanovna Bagrova—an orphan heiress, an inmate of his house, and most dearly loved by him—was married during his absence to a detestable man whom he abhorred. It is true that the marriage was duly arranged by the orphan's own relatives, but it owed much to the connivance and co-operation of Arina Vasilievna and her daughters. But I will tell this story of sorrow later, and will now resume my tale of the Happy Day.

My grandfather had awakened towards five o'clock in the afternoon, and, having supped his cold beer, had a fancy to drink tea. He was of opinion that a hot drink is very refreshing in hot weather. But first he took a bath in the cool waters of the Buguruslan, which flowed directly past the house. On returning from the river, he found all the family gathered round the tea table, which had been set out on the shady side of the house. The tea urn was bubbling merrily, and Aksiutka stood ready to pour out. Hot tea was my grandfather's veritable elixir for producing perspiration, and after drinking sundry cups tempered by the thickest and richest vellow cream, he suggested that all present should drive to the mill. The proposal was hailed with delight, and my two aunts, Alexandra and Tatiana, who were expert anglers, took their tackle with them. In a very short time two large carriages made their appearance. My grandfather and grandmother seated themselves in the first, while between them sat their only son, the precious heir of their ancient and noble family. In the second carriage were my three aunts and the young servant Nikoala Rusan. The last-named was taken to collect earthworms and fasten them to the young ladies' hooks. Arrived at their destination a seat was found for my grandmother in the shadow of the mill near the lock, and there she sat, while her younger daughters fished close at hand. The eldest girl, Jelisaveta Stepanovna—partly to please her father, and partly from a real interest in the matter -went with Stepan Michailovitsch to inspect the grinding

and crushing machinery. The little boy watched his sisters angle, (he himself was not permitted to fish in deep water), and then played about near his mother, who never let him out of her sight, lest he should fall into the pond. Both millstones were working: one husking wheat for the master's household, and the other grinding rye for a stranger. stamping gear was crushing millet. My grandfather was very expert in all branches of country industry. He knew all about the working of a mill and explained every detail of the machinery to his attentive and intelligent daughter. He could instantly detect any fault in the wheels or defect in the adjustment of the millstones. He had one of the latter lowered a notch, and the result was a stream of much finer meal, which gratified the owner of the corn exceedingly. On examining the other mill-set, he guessed by the jarring noise that a pin of the driving wheel had been nearly rubbed away: he shut off the water, and the miller, Boltunenok,1 sprang down, tested the wheel and said: "You are quite right little father Stepan Michailovitsch, one of the pins is a little worn." "Hm, a little!" replied my grandfather, without, however, losing his temper; "if I hadn't happened to notice it to-day, the wheel would have broken in half during the night." "Forgive me, Stepan Michailovitsch, I quite overlooked it." "Very well, I forgive you; be quick and bring another wheel: put another pin in the old one, and take care it is neither stronger nor weaker than the others—that's the main point. . . . " A new wheel, that had previously been fitted and tested, was immediately produced, fixed in position, and well greased: the water was then gradually released, until the current ran at its full strength—all this. was done under my grandfather's personal supervision—and very soon the humming millstone was grinding merrily away, with none of its former rattles and hitches. Next my grandfather and his daughter visited the stamping millhouse, where Stepan Michailovitsch took up a handful of the crushed millet, spread it out on his open palm, blew on it, and said to the Mordvin assistant, whom he recognised: " Now listen to me Neighbour Vasili! Look here and you will see there is not a bit of uncrushed grain left. If you don't stop stamping

your millet now, you will only reduce the quantity." Vasili made a test for himself, and finding that my grandfather had judged correctly, thanked him heartily, bowed or rather nodded a salute, and rushed off to stop the water wheel. From thence my grandfather and his pupil trotted off to the poultry-yard, where they found everything in the best order. Geese, ducks, fowls and turkeys were there in the greatest abundance, and all throve under the charge of the old henwife and her granddaughter. As a mark of especial favour my grandfather gave his hand to both women to kiss, and told them that in future, to their monthly ration of meal twenty pounds of wheaten flour for cakes should be added. and then, very well satisfied with his survey. Stepan Michailovitsch returned to Arina Vasilievna, and informed her that the mill was in excellent working order, his daughter was a most intelligent girl, and old Tatiana a capital henwife.

The heat had long since abated, and the approaching cool of the evening was even more noticeable at the waterside; a long cloud of dust marked the road winding towards the village; and more, and yet more audible the lowing and bleating of the home-going flocks and herds came on the breeze; the sun was sinking behind the hills. Stepan Michailovitsch stood in a reverie beside the mill dam, gazing at the smooth motionless pool extended like a mirror between its level banks. Now and again a playful fish leapt high in the air, but my grandfather was no fisherman.

"It is time for us to return home, Arischa," he said at last, "the steward will be waiting for me." The younger daughters, taking advantage of his good humour, begged permission to remain a little longer at the dam, as they said the fish always bite better after sunset. They themselves would make their way home on foot, in half-anhour, or so. My grandfather willingly agreed, and he and his wife drove home together, while Jelisaveta Stepanovna and her little brother followed in the second cart. Stepan Michailovitsch had guessed right—the steward was waiting on the doorstep, nor was he alone, but accompanied by two serfs and two women. The truth was that the steward had seen my grandfather earlier in the day, and having noted the master's wonderful good humour, had mentioned the

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circumstance in the hearing of the serfs. Hence certain of these, who had special petitions to make, took this favourable opportunity of approaching their master; and all quitted the house well content. My grandfather made a gift of corn to one man, who already owed him a quantity which he could easily have repaid had he chosen to do so: to another peasant he granted permission for his son to marry without waiting until autumn, 1 and not even to wed the girl to whom he had been previously betrothed but another woman—a soldier's widow, who had been threatened with exile from the village owing to her bad conduct; and, in addition, he gave the couple permission to live with the bride's father; and so forth. More than this, each person present was handed a silver cup filled with strongest home-brewed brandy. In a few short words my grandfather gave the necessary orders respecting the management of the estate to the steward, and then hurried to the dining room, where supper was waiting him. Supper was very much the same sort of meal as dinner, but if possible more enjoyable, as the cool evening air had sharpened the family's appetites. When it was over, and he had wished his wife and children good-Night, Stepan Michailovitsch, as his wont was, cooled himself for half an hour on the balcony, clad only in his shirt. He had a whim to set Masan and Tanaitschenok to try their strength in a bout of fisticuffs, and he urged them on with such energy that very soon the pair were engaged in a serious scuffle and real quarrel. But my grandfather, who was already weary of the spectacle, stopped the fight, and brought the combatants to their senses with a few stern words.

The splendour of the brief summer night dwelt everywhere. The glow of the sunset shimmered unextinguished in the West, till overtaken by the first red beams of Morning. Darker and darker grew the canopy of Heaven; clearer and clearer twinkled the stars; louder and louder echoed the shrieks of the night-birds as they approached their haunts among the dwellings of mankind. Nearer and nearer resounded the rattle and rumble of the mill through the misty twilight. . . . My grandfather rose to his feet, gazed up towards the starry heavens, crossed himself twice; and then, careless alike of his sultry chamber and his hot feather bed, lay down and drew the curtains close.

¹Autumn is the season when the serfs are permitted to marry. [Tr. S. R.]

SKETCH II

MICHAIL MAXIMOVITSCH KUROLESOV

I have already promised to relate the full story of Michail Maximovitsch Kurolesov and of his marriage to my grand-father's cousin—Praskovia Ivanovna Bagrova. My chronicles begin in the sixtieth year of the Eighteenth Century, consequently at an earlier date than the occurrences already related: on the other hand, the end comes very much later. And having explained this much, I hasten to fulfil my promise.

Stepan Michailovitsch was the only son of Michail Petrovitsch Bagrov; Praskovia Ivanovna the only daughter of his uncle, Ivan Petrovitsch Bagrov. Hence my grandfather regarded her with a two-fold affection, both as the sole female shoot of the Bagrov Family, and as his only cousin. The girl lost her mother while still in infancy, and was but ten years old when her father died. The mother came of the wealthy stock of the Bakteievs, and the daughter inherited her dowry of nine hundred serfs, a large fortune, and great store of silver and jewels. To these rich possessions were added the three hundred serfs of her late father, and the orphan became a great heiress . . . and a good match! After her father's death, she went, at first, to live with her grandmother, Madame Bakteieva: but as time went on she visited Troizkoie more and more frequently, each time making a longer stay, until in the end Stepan Michailovitsch persuaded her to settle for good and all in his house. Stepan Michailovitsch loved his cousin as well as his own daughters and manifested his tender regard for her in his own fashion; but Praskovia Ivanova was too young, or-to speak more justly-too childish to value her cousin's affection at its true worth; for he never stooped to the flattery and adulation to which the girl had been accustomed in her grandmother's house. Small wonder, then, that she soon grew tired and sick of Troizkoie, and began

to wish herself back again in the old life with her grandmother Bakteieva. Praskovia Ivanovna was not pretty, but she had regular features, earnest, intelligent grey eyes, and the broad long, dark eyebrows which betoken a strong, and even masculine, character. She was tall, and looked fully eighteen when she was but fourteen years old. But in spite of her physical development, she was only a child in heart and mind. Her disposition was very lively and artless, and she would sing and frolic from morning to night. She had a marvellously beautiful voice, and loved romantic songs, dancing, and games. When left to herself, she would spend the whole day playing with dolls, while she beguiled her play with every possible variety of folk song, of which she knew an incredible number.

The year before she took up her abode with Stepan Michailovitsch, a young officer of some eight-and-twenty years, one Michail Maximovitsch Kurolesov, one of the native aristocracy, was spending his furlough at his home in the Government of Simbirsk. He was fairly good-lookingmany indeed considered him handsome—others however affirmed, that in spite of the beauty of his features his face had something repulsive about it, and, as a child, I recollect hearing my grandmother and aunts arguing about his looks. Since his fifteenth year he had served in a regiment which enjoyed a distinguished reputation in those days, and he was already promoted major. He seldom took any leave, for with his hundred and fifty serfs and small estate, he was not able to keep up any sort of establishment. Although he had no real culture, he was very clever and adroit in conversation, and wrote in a dashing and correct style. I have several of his letters in my possession, and they prove him to have been a man of cunning and suave, withal of a firm and practical mind. I know not indeed, how he came to be related to our immortal Suvorov 1; but among Kurolesov's papers I find certain letters from the genial Commander-in-Chief, all of which begin as follows: "Dear Sir, and Cousin Michail Maximovitsch," and conclude in like manner. "With the expression of deepest respect for yourself, and my esteemed lady and cousin, Praskovia Ivanovna, I have the honour to remain. . . ." and so forth. Very little was known of Michail ¹Suvorov, Alexander Vasilevisch (1729-1800) Russian field-marshal. [Tr.]

MICHAIL MAXIMOVITSCH KUROLESOV

Maximovitsch in Simbirsk; nevertheless, "the world is full of rumour," and during his short furloughs he may have permitted himself sundry excesses, which were whispered abroad in spite of the severity he invariably shewed towards gossiping servants. Briefly he had earned a certain reputation, which may be summed up in the following aphorism: "The Major will permit no liberties; you must always be on your guard with him, and make no slip: he takes an interest in his soldiers and protects them to the best of his ability: but let one of them commit but the smallest fault, and he need expect no mercy: Kurolesov's word is final: as an enemy he is a match for the Devil himself —he is a fox, a madcap, a demon!" All the same he was universally regarded as a sound man of business. rumours, from the same source, had it that the Major was addicted to drink, and his amours were too numerous: the latter failing however was excused by the old adage: "Such a thing brings no shame on the man"; the former with similar excuses: "One drink is no disgrace to a man." or "He who is drunk and keeps his wits, is two steps ahead of anyone else." And they added that the Major always knew the right place and the right time for his pranks. And so it befell that Kurolesov was regarded in a charitable, and, in some quarters, even a favourable light. It is only natural to suppose that he was always careful to be amiable and polite, especially towards old and important people, so that he was welcomed everywhere. As a near neighbour and distant relative of the Bakteiev family, (through Madame Bakteieva's son-in-law, Kurmyschev), he soon found means to establish himself in her house on the most easy and familiar footing. At first he had no special design, only following his usual custom of ingratiating himself as much as possible with people of wealth and rank; but later, noting the rich and lively young heiress, Praskovia Ivanovna, (who already looked almost a woman), he resolved to marry her and secure her fortune for himself. With a view to this end he redoubled his attentions to Praskovia's grandmother and aunt, and had soon assured himself of the support of both ladies; while he courted the girl herself so skilfully, that she soon grew very fond of him, merely because he deferred to her in every thing, anticipated her wishes, and above all, spoilt her. Michail

Maximovitsch disclosed his love to Praskovia's relations, played the rôle of lover, and everyone believed him when he vowed his passion was wasting him away; that night and day he dreamt only of his Praskovia; and that he was crazy with love for her. He was pitied and lamented—encouraged to hope—in short he was the heart-broken lover. With such sympathetic encouragement from the relations, the rest of the comedy was an easy business. He was able to procure the girl a thousand little pleasures. He took her for drives in his carriage with his beautiful horses, he would spend hours in the swing with her, he sang her favourite folksongs with her; he made her all sorts of little presents, and sent to Moscow for beautiful playthings for her.

The consent of the cousin-guardian being absolutely necessary for the full accomplishment of his design, Michail Maximovitsch next tried his utmost to obtain the goodwill of my grandfather. Under various pretexts, and amply supplied with the highest of high recommendations from Praskovia's relations, he paid several visits to Stepan Michailovitsch at his own house, but he never succeeded in gaining the old gentleman's favour in the least degree. first sight, may appear somewhat strange, especially as the Major possessed so many qualities in common with Stepan Michailovitsch: but over and above his judgment the old man possessed such a keen moral instinct for none but upright and honest people, that he could instantly detect any crooked or base traits in any man's character; he perceived evil intentions from the start, even when concealed under the most attractive exterior. smooth speech and courteous bearing of his visitor were of no avail, and did not mislead Stepan Michailovitsch for one moment; for he instantly guessed that some sinister design underlay all this politeness. Withal, my grandfather's principles exacted a blameless course of life; and the reports of the Major's profligacy, so easily condoned by others, filled the strict old man with real aversion for Kurolesov: although he himself in the heat of passion was capable of acts of blind fury, it horrified him to hear of people who could commit barbarities without anger and in cold blood. consequence of these impressions, he received Michail Maxim-

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ovitsch on his first visit, in the most distant manner, in spite of the latter's interesting conversation on various subjects, especially farming: but the instant the guest turned to Praskovia Ivanovna—(who had already made her home with my grandfather) --- and began treating her quite as an old friend. while the girl listened with obvious delight to his flattering remarks, my grandfather made a wry face, drew his heavy evebrows together as was his wont when angry, and cast suspicious and unfriendly looks in Kurolesov's direction. The lady of the house and all her daughters, on the contrary, were charmed with the visitor -- as he had taken good care from his first entrance into the family that they should be—he flattering them, while they were only too pleased to chat with him in the friendliest way. Unfortunately, however, the very visible signs of the approaching storm depicted upon my grandfather's countenance struck terror into their hearts, and an awkward silence ensued. In vain the guest endeavoured to start a cheery general conversation: he only elicited nervous, monosyllabic replies to his polite remarks; and my grandfather became positively rude. Nothing remained possible for the visitor but to take his departure, although it was already late in the evening, and he had been invited, country-fashion, to spend the night. "A good-for-nothing fellow, and a scamp; and it's to be hoped he never shews his face here again!" was Stepan Michailovitsch's verdict to his family; who, naturally, did not venture to contradict him; but the stately Major was very favourably discussed in the ladies' apartments-and the unsophisticated young heiress talked much, and heard much talk, of his charming manners.

After this unequivocal rebuff Michail Maximovitsch hurried back to Madame Bakteieva, and related to her the foregoing events. They knew my grandfather too well to hope that he would ever give his consent to the betrothal, after such a reception. They considered how best to appease him, but could think of nothing feasible. The bold Major proposed that the grandmother should invite the girl to stay with her, and then the wedding could take place without Stepan Michailovitsch's consent; but Madame Bakteieva and her daughter, Madame Kurmyscheva, guessed rightly that my grandfather would never permit Praskovia to leave

his house alone, so shortly after the Major's visit; and the latter's leave was drawing near its end. Kurolesov next suggested a desperate plan: to persuade Praskovia to elope with him, to carry her off, and to marry her straightway at the nearest parish; the relations, however, would not hear of such a scandal; and so it came about that Michail Maximovitsch had to rejoin his regiment without having attained his object. But mysterious are the ways of Providence, nor is it in our power to comprehend how Fate willed that such evil business should be carried out successfully. Six months passed, and old Madame Bakteieva heard that Stepan Michailovitsch was preparing for a long journey. I cannot recollect whether it was to Moscow or Astrachan that he was bound, but his errand must have been one of considerable importance, as his steward accompanied him. Immediately a letter was sent to my grandfather, begging that Praskovia should be allowed to stay with her grandmother during his absence—which request received the prompt and curt reply that Praskovia was perfectly happy at Troizkoie, and anyone who wished to see her, must exert themselves to pay her a visit there. After sending this ultimatum, and after solemnly impressing upon his docile Arina Vasilievna that she must guard Praskovia as the very apple of her eye, and on no account permit her to quit Troizkoie, Stepan Michailovitsch departed on his journey.

Madame Bakteieva kept up a brisk correspondence with Praskovia and my grandfather's womenkind. So, as soon as she heard Stepan Michailovitsch was safely out of the way, she wrote and informed Michail Maximovitsch Kurolesov, adding that the old fellow would be a good while absent, and that his best plan would be to come himself and conclude the business that he had in view . . . and that she and her daughter would meet him at Troizkoie. She and Arina Vasilievna had always been on most friendly terms, and when she learnt that the latter was very prepossessed by Kurolesov, she described how the charming young Major was dying for love of Praskovia, and sang the praises of the suitor with great warmth and energy. She added that her dearest wish was to see her darling, fatherless granddaughter married before she died; and she felt that her beloved child would be

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happy with this man Kurolesov: that she herself had not long to live, and therefore wished to hurry on the affair. On her side, Arina Vasilievna had nothing to say against the plan, but expressed great doubt whether Stepan Michailovitsch would ever give his consent : as Michail Maximovitsch, in spite of all his perfections, in some extraordinary way had failed to please her husband. The two elder daughters of Arina Vasilievna were called to a family council, presided over by old Madame Bakteieva and her daughter, Madame Kurmyscheva—an especially ardent partisan of the Major and it was decided to leave the entire management of the business in the hands of Praskovia's grandmother, as the girl's nearest relative—all this of course on the clear understanding that Stepan Michailovitsch's wife and daughters took no hand in the game, and were supposed to know nothing about the affair. I have already described Arina Vasilievna as a good natured and somewhat weak-minded old lady: and as her daughters were entirely on Madame Bakteieva's side, it was quite easy to persuade her to a step which was certain to bring her husband's unbounded wrath upon her. Meanwhile the gay, heedless Praskovia was quite ignorant of her impending fate. Many allusions were made in her hearing to Michail Maximovitsch, in fact no praise was too high for that excellent man—he adored Praskovia, he loved her better than life itself—night and day he thought but of her, and she might be sure that when he next came on a visit he would bring all sorts of beautiful presents from Moscow. This sort of talk was very delightful to Praskovia Ivanovna, and she vowed that she, too, loved Michail Maximovitsch more than anyone else in the world. During Madame Bakteieva's stay at Troizkoie, a letter arrived from Kurolesov, in which he arranged to come over as soon as he could get leave. Finally the old Bakteieva and her daughter returned to their own estate, after they had persuaded Arina Vasilievna to say nothing of their visit in her letters to her husband; and to permit Praskovia to visit her grandmother at an early date, under the pretext that the latter was dangerously ill. Praskovia Ivanovna wept and entreated permission to leave with her grandmother, especially when she heard that the Major was coming soon. But she was not allowed to leave,

out of fear of Stepan Michailovitsch's anger. Kurolesov, meanwhile, had not been able to get any leave of absence as yet, and it was a good two months before he arrived on the But soon after his arrival an express messenger arrived at Troizkoie, with a letter from Madame Kurmyscheva. who wrote that her mother was sick unto death, and desired to see her grand-child once more before she died; doubtless, the letter continued, Stepan Michailovitsch would offer no objection to the girl hurrying to her grandmother's bedside to receive her dying farewell. The letter was evidently written with the intention of giving Arina Vasilievna every opportunity of exonerating herself in the eves of Stepan Michailovitsch. True to her promise, and quite easy in her mind as to the future. Arina Vasilievna set off immediately, and conveyed Praskovia to the so-called deathbed of her grandmother. spent a week with the invalid, and returned home enchanted alike by Michail Maximovitsch's charming manners and the extremely costly presents that he had brought from Moscow for herself and her daughters. Praskovia Ivanovna was in a state of rapture; her dearest grandmother was already better when she arrived; and the dear kind Major was there with all sorts of lovely toys from Moscow. Not a day passed but he came to Madame Bakteieva's house, always ready to chat and joke with Praskovia-in short, he so played on the girl's affectionate and grateful heart, that, as soon as her grandmother told her he wished to make her his wife, she, mere child that she was, went wild with joy, and ran about the house telling everyone she met that she was going to marry Michail Maximovitsch—how happy they would be together what joy to drive with him all day long with his beautiful horses; and to swing, or sing songs, or play with dolls together—even with great big dolls, as big as babies, which could walk and curtsy. This was the sort of life anticipated by the poor little bride. The conspirators hurried on affairs. lest any rumour of what was happening should reach the cousin's ears: friends and neighbours were invited to the betrothal, the young people exchanged rings and kisses, and sat side by side in the place of honour while all present drank to their good health and happiness. At first the bride was extremely bored by all this ceremony, the endless compliments,

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and the long sitting-in-state; but as she was allowed to have her new Moscow doll to sit beside her, she recovered her good humour, told the guests it was her child, and made the doll bow and curtsy her thanks for their polite congratulations. A week later the pair were married with full observance of all necessary rites, the fifteen-year-old bride being described as seventeen, a statement which her build and height fully Although Arina Vasilievna and her daughters must have known that this would be the inevitable end of the plot, they heard of Praskovia's marriage with extreme terror: the scales, as it were fell from their eyes, and they realised that neither the pretended illness of the grandmother. nor the crafty letter of Madame Kurmyscheva would save them from Stepan Michailovitsch's fury. Before the actual news of the marriage had reached Troizkoie. Arina Vasilievna had written and told her husband that she had taken Praskovia to visit her dving grandmother, that they had found the old lady somewhat better, but needing her grandchild's company in order to make a full recovery; that she herself had returned home, not wishing to leave the girls too long by themselves—but that it would have taken force to remove Praskovia: nevertheless she was afraid she had incurred his displeasure. Stepan Michailovitsch's reply to this letter was that Arina had behaved very stupidly, and she must set off immediately to Madame Bakteieva's house and bring Praskovia home with her. Arina Vasilievna sighed and wept over his letter, and was at her wits' end how to act in the matter. Shortly after this the young couple paid her a visit. Praskovia appeared to be perfectly happy and cheerful, though less childish and less inclined to give vent to open expressions of her happiness. The husband seemed equally happy, and withal so calm and judicious, that he quite comforted poor Arina Vasilievna by his sage counsels. argued in his most convincing and reassuring manner that the whole of Stepan Michailovitsch's wrath would fall on the grandmother's head: that the latter, in consideration of her serious illness, had had a perfect right to anticipate Stepan Michailovitsch's consent, which would certainly have been granted in time; that the wedding would never have taken place, had it not been that the grandmother was likely to

expire any day, and leave her beloved granddaughter alone in the world-a desolate orphan-whose cousin indeed was a poor exchange for a loving grandparent. A great deal of this sort of soothing conversation took place between him and the Troizkoie ladies, accompanied by the presentation of costly gifts, which they—the ladies—accepted with the greatest pleasure, mingled with a certain amount of guilty fear. Presents were even left for Stepan Michailovitsch himself. The Major advised Arina Vasilievna not to mention anything about the marriage in her letters to her husband, but to leave the announcement to be made by the newlymarried pair themselves; and he promised that he and Praskovia Ivanovna would take the earliest opportunity of sending a long joint letter. But the fact was, he had not the slightest intention of writing to Stepan Michailovitsch: his idea was to postpone the inevitable storm as long as possible. while he made haste to establish himself firmly in his new position. Directly after his marriage he had asked for his discharge from the army, which was promptly granted. His first step was to pay visits, accompanied by his young wife, to all relations, his own as well as hers. In Simbirsk—starting with the Governor himself—he paid his respects to every person of any standing whatever. Everyone was delighted with the charming pair: and the Major was so successful in currying favour everywhere, that very soon all the gentry of the district quite approved of the marriage. And so another few months passed.

Meanwhile Stepan Michailovitsch, who had received no letters for a long time, and whose lawsuit was still undecided, was suddenly seized with such an irresistible longing to see his home, that he set off and arrived quite unexpectedly at Troizkoie one fine morning. Arina Vasilievna trembled in every limb when she heard the awful news: The master has arrived! Stepan Michailovitsch rushed joyfully into the house, asked if all were alive and well, clasped his Arina and his children to his heart, and then enquired: "But where is Praskovia?" Encouraged by the loving tones of his voice, Arina Vasilievna replied with a forced laugh; "I really do not exactly know where she is at present: probably with her grandmother. But of course you know, little father, that she

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is married! " The astonishment and fury of my grandfather at these words were absolutely beyond description. His rage increased when he heard that Praskovia had married Kurolesov He would have attacked his wife there and then, but she and all her daughters fell at his feet and yowed that everything had been done without their knowledge, and that they had been utterly deceived by Madame Bakteieva. The letter was produced as evidence of their innocence. My grandfather's rage was instantly directed against the old Bakteieva; ordered fresh horses, and after a few hours' rest set out for her estate. It can well be imagined with what ferocity he attacked Praskovia's old grandmother. After the first outburst the old lady adopted a haughty attitude, and set to work in her turn to abuse my grandfather, growing more and more heated as she proceeded. "How dare you insult me." she screamed, "do vou take me for one of your serfs? You seem to forget that I am as good as you are, and my husband was of much higher rank than you! I am much more nearly related to Praskovia than you are: I am her grandmother, and my rights as a guardian are every bit as good as yours! I only had her happiness in view, and I was not going to wait for your consent, because I thought I was dying and had no intention of leaving her at your mercy-I know you only too well, you're a madman and a wild beast! You knock people about in your house. Michail Maximovitsch is a very good match, and Praskovia was in love with him. And I should like to know who objects to him! Only yourself. Ask your daughters and your wife: they can appreciate him." "You lying old harridan," roared my grandfather, "you deceived Arina, you pretended to be ill, and sold Praskovia to that scoundrel Kurolesov, who seems to have bewitched you all!" These remarks sent old Madame Bakteieva nearly beside herself with rage, and she blurted out that Arina Vasilievna. and her daughters too, knew everything there was to know about the marriage, and had accepted plenty of presents from Michail Maximovitsch. These disclosures gave a new direction to my grandfather's anger. Threatening to separate Praskovia from her husband on the ground of her minority, he set off home again, calling on his way at the house of the priest who had married the couple. He called him to account

with the utmost vehemence, but the priest calmly produced all the marriage documents, the signatures of the bride, her grandmother, and those of the witnesses, as well as Praskovia's baptismal certificate, which proved she was over seventeen years old. This was a fresh blow for my grandfather, who now lost all hope of ever being able to annul the hateful marriage, and whose fiery wrath kindled more and more against Arina Vasilievna and her daughters. I prefer not to give an exact account of what actually happened when at last he reached home. There was a frightful and horrible scene. Even thirty years later my aunts could not recall that day without a shudder. Enough that the guilty women confessed everything, that all Kurolesov's presents were sent back to Madame Bakteieva with orders to return them to the donor: that the older daughters were ill for a very long time, that my grandmother lost most of her hair and was compelled to wear a plaster on her head for a year afterwards. The newly-married pair were advised never to shew their faces to my grandfather again, and the name of Kurolesov was forbidden to be mentioned in his house.

Meanwhile Time—that healer of soul and body, that queller of passions—flowed on its peaceful course. At the end of a year not only was Arina Vasilievna's head mended, but the feeling of resentment in Stepan Michailovitsch's heart had died away. At first, he would neither receive the Kurolesovs, nor listen to a word about them: he refused even to read the numerous letters written to him by Praskovia Ivanovna. But towards the end of a twelvemonth, when from every side news reached him of the perfect happiness of the young wedded pair and of the marvellous change in the character of Praskovia, who had suddenly become quiet and sensible, Stepan Michailovitsch's heart softened, and he felt a natural longing to see his beloved cousin once again. He considered rightly, that she was the least to blame of anyone connected with the affair, being but a child, and he granted her permission to visit Troizkoie, unaccompanied. however, by her husband. Naturally she hurried over to see her cousin at once. And the vast change in Praskovia Ivanovna after a year of marriage aroused my grandfather's veritable astonishment. How could it have been otherwise.

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indeed! The past year had awakened a great tenderness and affection for her cousin, which she had never felt for him in bygone days: and which, considering the circumstances of her secret marriage, was absolutely incredible. Could it be that those eyes which overflowed with tears, as he greeted her on her arrival, revealed to her what deep love was concealed under the rough exterior and surly obstinacy of this man? Did some vague foreboding of the dark future warn her that here was the real stay and support of her life? she at last comprehend that amongst all those who had flattered and caressed her in childhood, no one had loved her more truly than the cross old cousin, who had tried to wreck her happiness and who hated her darling husband? I know not, but all were astounded at the change in the demeanour of the frivolous girl towards her cousin. She, who in former days had refused to recognise his right of guardianship or her duty towards him as his ward—(and who now had real grounds for offence, in consequence of his brutal behaviour towards her own grandmother)—met him as an affectionate sister, or even a devotedly-attached daughter returning to an adored father. Be that as it may, this sudden sympathy, this deep affection, only ended with life itself. And how marvellous was the transformation which Praskovia's whole nature had undergone in this short time! The thoughtless child had vanished for ever, and in her place was a serenelycheerful, but thoughtful woman. She candidly admitted that everyone had done her cousin the greatest wrong; but pleaded in extenuation of their deceit, her own childish ignorance, and the blind love of her grandmother, her husband, and all the other relatives, for herself. She did not press for the immediate pardon of her husband—the greatest offender of all: she only ventured to hope—that in time, and when he saw how happy she was, and with what zeal and ardour her husband looked after all her interests—Cousin Stepan Michailovitsch would forgive Kurolesov, and ask him to come to Troizkoie. Stepan Michailovitsch was so much touched by Praskovia's humility that he could not reply. He did not keep his good little cousin, as he henceforth invariably called her, long, but sent her back home to her husband after a short stay at Troizkoie, saying her place was with the latter. On

parting with her, he said: "If, at the end of another year, you and your husband are as happy together as you now are; and if he goes on as well as he has done, then he and I will be reconciled."

And, indeed, at the year's end, during which time he had frequently met his cousin and seen how happy and contented with her lot she was, Stepan Michailovitsch wrote, and said: "Come; and bring your husband to see me!" The old gentleman greeted Kurolesov with the utmost friendliness, told him frankly that he had had serious objections to him at first, and vowed that if he continued to behave well to Praskovia, he should be recognised as a loved and esteemed member of the family. Michail Maximovitsch's behaviour was perfect—not so flattering and obsequious as formerly, but most attentive, polite, and respectful. It was plain that he had acquired perfect independence and self-reliance. talked a great deal about his intention of taking over the full management and control of Praskovia's estates; asked my grandfather for his advice; was very quick to comprehend, and marvellously quick to utilise the latter's valuable information. He even discovered a distant relationship which he explained existed between his family and the Bagrovs' before his marriage, and addressed my grandfather as Uncle. while Arina Vasilievna was Aunt, and their children Cousins. Even before the reconciliation he had seized an opportunity of doing Stepan Michailovitsch a service. My grandfather was aware of this, and while thanking him for his kindness. bade him ask a like favour in return. In short, all passed off famously. Appearances were entirely in favour of Michail Maximovitsch, but my grandfather kept his opinion unchanged: "Yes," said he, "the man is clever, and sensible and prudent; but trust him I never could, and never can."

So another year passed away, in the course of which Stepan Michailovitsch emigrated to the Province of Ufa. Kurolesov's conduct during the first three years after his marriage was so orderly and discreet, or at least so circumspect, that nothing adverse came to light. Besides, he was very seldom at home, and spent the whole of his time travelling. At the same time a rumour arose and spread abroad that the young master was somewhat too severe. During the two following years

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Kurolesov effected such wonderful improvements in the entire management and direction of his wife's estates that folks were lost in wonder at his tireless activity, his love of enterprise, and his iron will. Previously to his taking them in hand. Praskovia's estates had been in a very neglected state. many instances they were going to wreck and ruin owing to the lazy habits of the peasantry. Very little income was paid, not because there was no market for the country produce. but because some of the lands were very ill-cultivated, while in other parts the proportion of arable land was very small: and Praskovia owned the estates in common with her grandmother Bakteieva and her aunt Kurmyscheva, Maximovitsch arranged to transport the serfs properties, and to sell the old property very advantageously. He first purchased seven thousand dessiatines of Steppe land in the District of Stavropol, in the Province of Simbirsk (now Samara). This was most excellent land in the Black Soil Belt, and was two ells deep in rich soil; it was situated on the banks of the rivulet Berlia, round whose springs grew but a scanty forest; besides this, the ban-forest, called the Bears' Glen, was the only wood on the whole estate. To this part he conveyed three hundred and fifty of the serfs. In this way he established a highly productive estate, only a hundred versts from Samara; and distant sixty and forty versts respectively from other Volga ports. It is a recognised fact that a convenient market for corn and other produce is the crowning excellence of a good estate. His next act was to journey to the Government of Ufa, where he purchased from the Baskhirs some twenty thousand dessiatines of land, also black earth, but very inferior to the Simbirsk property as it included a considerable amount of forest lands. This land lay in several plots on the banks of the river Usen, and beside the rivulets of the Siuiusch, Meleus, Karmalka, and Belebeika; and at that time belonged, if I recollect aright to the Menselinsk Circuit: now it is included in the Belebei Circuit in the Government of Orenburg. Michail Maximovitsch sent four hundred and fifty of his people to the well-watered neighbourhood of the Siuiusch: and fifty men were settled on the banks of the Belebieka. To the larger colony he gave the name of Paraschino, the smaller colony he called Ivanovka, the estate

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in the Simbirsk Government was called Kurolesovo, and thus the three properties were respectively called by the baptismal,1 paternal, and married names of his wife. This piece of sentiment on the part of a man, whom I shall shortly have occasion to portray in such dark colours, has always filled me with astonishment. For his own residence he chose Tschurasovo, an estate which Praskovia had inherited from her mother, and which was situated only fifty versts distant from the capital of the Government. There he built what, in those days, was considered a most magnificent house, surrounded by equally splendid stables and other buildings. The fittings of the house, furniture, indoor and outdoor decorations, chandeliers and candelabra, bronzes and china and the superb silver plate, were the admiration of all who saw them. This beautiful house was situated on the slope of a gentlyswelling hill, from which gushed more than twenty most abundant springs. House, wooded slope, and springs were all surrounded by extensive and luxuriant gardens full of the finest fruit trees of every variety. The household arrangements-servants, cuisine, horses and carriages-everything betokened the most refined and fastidious luxury. Visitors, both from the neighbourhood-where many landed gentry and nobles resided—and from the city, were never lacking at Tschurasovo: life there was an endless round of feasting. drinking, singing, card-playing, and chatter. Michail Maximovitsch was very particular that his Praskovia should always be richly and elegantly dressed, and, whenever he was at home, seemed solely occupied with her, and the carrying out of her slightest wish. Briefly, at the end of a few years he had attained such a footing in society, that good folks admired, while bad folks envied him. Nor did Michail Maximovitsch neglect his religious duties, and in place of the shabby old wooden church, in two years arose a stately stone-built edifice. decorated in exquisite taste, and even possessing a quite passable choir, chosen from amongst the servants, and trained under the master's guidance. Four years after her marriage, a little daughter was born to the happy and contented Praskovia, and a year later came a little son. But the children did not live long: the girl died before she was a year old, and the boy

¹ Parascha is a diminutive of Praskovia. [Tr. H. R.]

when he was scarcely three. Praskovia Ivanovna was most tenderly attached to the little boy, and his loss affected her most deeply. For a whole year she took no interest in anything; her once-blooming health faded and vanished; and she never had another child.

All this time the consequence and dignity of Michail Maximovitsch increased in the country with every day, and every hour. The poor and obscure nobility had certainly a good deal to endure from his arrogant and despotic demeanour; and by this class of neighbours he was more feared than loved: but the upper ranks of nobles were by no means displeased with his methods of reminding the lower ranks of their inferior position. Each year Michail Maximovitsch's absences from home had grown longer and more frequent, especially since the unhappy year when Praskovia Ivanovna refused to be comforted for the loss of her son. It would seem that the tears and lamentations of his wife had been wearisome to him: and that the deserted house—for Praskovia Ivanovna would receive no company—had bored him. Be that as it may, there soon came a time when even the glittering company assembled at Tschurasovo ceased to charm him.

Strange rumours meanwhile arose, which grew and spread in all directions: it was whispered that the Major was not merely severe, as had been reported of him in his earlier days, but he had begun to treat his retainers with cruelty: that he went so frequently to his estates in Ufa in order that he might give himself up to unrestrained drunkenness and vice of every possible description: that he had gathered together an unholy company who practised abominations under his directions: that the worst thing about him was the unutterable cruelties that he inflicted on his serfs when he was intoxicated: and that already two men had died under torture. It was also said that all the higher officials in both of the districts where his new estates were situated, were entirely on his side: he having bribed some and persuaded others to become his boon companions, while he instilled terror into everyone: the lower officials and the lesser nobility trembled before him, for he was wont, if anyone displeased him, to lay hold of him in broad daylight, carry him off, throw him into a cellar, where he was nearly perished with cold and

hunger, and not infrequently flogged with a frightful whip called a Cat 1

Not only were these rumours true, but they only gave hints of the truth, the facts being far worse than the timid peasants dared relate. The bloodthirsty nature of Kurolesov had developed to such a pitch under the influence of spirituous liquor that humanity shuddered at it. It was a hideous combination of a tiger's instinct and human intellect.

Finally rumours became certainty, and no one in Praskovia's neighbourhood had any more doubts as to the fearful truth. Whenever Michail Maximovitsch visited Tschurasovo for a rest between his criminal periods, his manner of old times was quite unchanged—always friendly and respectful towards his equals, and polite and affectionate with his wife, who was now consoled for the loss of her children, and was once more surrounded by a cheerful circle of friends. Although Michail Maximovitsch was careful never to lav a finger upon a soul in Tschurasovo, where all punishment was administered by the steward, yet everyone in the house trembled at the sound of his voice. Likewise, in the manner of any relatives or intimate friends who had any intercourse with him, an unmistakeable aversion could be detected. But of all this Praskovia Ivanovna saw nothing, or if she did, she attributed it to some other cause—the universal esteem and the involuntary respect, which her husband's wonderful abilities. self-won wealth, and energetic will, excited in all hearts. Kind folks, who loved Praskovia Iyanovna, rejoiced at her ignorance of the real truth, for she was both gay and serene. and they wished to prolong her happiness as long as possible. It is true that many a female to-day, and many a woman of small social importance, would have only been too delighted to take an opportunity of revenging herself upon the insolent Major-with his high and mighty manners towards his inferiors—by unmasking his real character. But over and above the actual fear inspired by the Major himself, another formidable obstacle stood in the way of such exposure. This

¹ This Cat was Michail Maximovitsch's favourite instrument of torture. It was a scourge of seven leathern lashes, each knotted at the end. After Kurolesov's death it was kept for many years in a lumber room at Paraschino. When the estate came into the possession of Stepan Michailovitsch's son, the Cat was burnt.

was the attitude taken by Praskovia Ivanovna herself, who would not tolerate the slightest criticism of her husband. She was too acute not to notice any sly attempt to introduce the subject into the conversation; and without waiting to hear any more, would bring her dark brows close together, remarking in her severest tone, that anyone who had a word to say against her husband should never enter her home again. Naturally, after such an outspoken warning, no one dare utter another word. Her own personal attendants—an old and favourite servant of her father and her own faithful nurse—of whom she made great favourites—(without however making them her confidants, as was customary among ladies of rank in those times)—were quite unable to speak frankly to her. Both these old people had only too much reason to wish their mistress to know the real character of her husband. as they had near relations in the master's service, who had plenty to suffer from his unrestrained outbreaks of fury. Finally, however, they decided to tell their mistress everything, and chose a moment when she was alone to speak to her. But scarcely had the name of Michail Maximovitsch been uttered, when the once easy-going Praskovia Ivanovna flew into a rage: she threatened her old nurse with banishment for life to Paraschino, if she ever dared to mention the master's name again. By such acts she closed every avenue to the truth and sealed the lips of those who had so much to disclose. Praskovia Iyanovna loved her husband and trusted him implicitly. She knew only too well how ready folks are to interfere with others' concerns: how eager to fish in troubled waters: and once and for all, she made a firm resolution and fixed principle, never to permit her husband's behaviour to be discussed in her presence. A most praiseworthy principle, indispensable to the maintenance of family concord! But even to this excellent precept exceptions must sometimes be made, of which the present case is an example. Had Praskovia's strong will—backed up by the circumstance that all the property was hers by right—been brought to bear as a check upon her husband, he might have been persuaded to give up his greed of wealth and power—his unbridled and furious passions would not have had free rein—and like many another, he might have lived a reasonable and happy life.

Another year passed-Michail Maximovitsch gave himsel. up, unchecked, to his furious instincts, which, increasing and developing, urged him on to commit fouler abominations, which went unpunished. I prefer not to describe the details of the horrible life he led when living on his distant estates. especially at Paraschino and the little District town: the story is too loathsome to repeat. I shall therefore confine myself to mentioning only what is necessary to give the reader an idea of this atrocious man. In the year following his marriage he devoted himself in the most energetic and even disinterested way to the numerous duties connected with the administration of his wife's estates. His ability, prudence, and industry were beyond praise. He undertook the arduous, wearisome, and complicated task of conveying great numbers of peasants to distant parts; and his indefatigable and skilful management was exerted solely for the benefit and well-being of the serfs. For this end he spared neither money nor pains, and saw that everyone was duly and fully furnished with everything needful. He thus provided against any risk of want or distress. He himself superintended the departure from the old homestead, accompanied the expedition a great part of the journey, then went on in advance to be ready to receive the emigrants on their arrival at their carefully-selected and comfortable new dwelling-places. True enough that he was severe, if not cruel, towards offenders. But against this severity might be set his justice to, and fair treatment of, good workers; and he knew when to keep his eyes closed. From time to time, it is true, he would break out, and spend a couple of riotous days in some little town: but he could throw off the effects of his drunkenness as easily as a goose shakes water off her feathers, and after such an interlude would only return with renewed zest to his interrupted labours.

At first this overwhelming mass of duties occupied his mind and hindered him from giving himself up to his ruinous habit of drinking, which aroused all his unnatural instincts. Hard work saved him for a time. But no sooner were the new estates of Paraschino and Kurolesovo in working order, and all the houses, huts, and farm buildings ready for occupation, than he had too much time and too little occupation, and gave himself up wholly to drinking with his boon companions.

His innate cruelty developed into a mad lust for torture and bloodshed. Encouraged by the terror and submissiveness of all around him, he rapidly lost all sense of humanity, and revelled in unrestrained acts of violence and brigandage. From among his servants and serfs he collected a body-guard of a couple of dozen infamous rascals, and organised these worthy instruments of his will into a veritable robber band. As these followers observed that their master was permitted to do exactly as he liked and that his maddest tricks went unpunished, they naturally grew to regard him as almighty; and, themselves drunkards and ruffians, were only too ready and willing to carry out his most outrageous commands. Had anyone offended Michail Maximovitsch in word or deed. even in such a small matter as failing to arrive at the appointed hour for a drinking-bout, it needed but a sign, and the trusty retainers set off in all haste, seized the delinquent—wherever he might happen to be, either openly or secretly—and dragged him before their master, who ordered him to be chained. knocked about, as often as not soundly flogged, and then locked up in the cellar. Michail Maximovitsch was a great lover of a fine horse; and he also admired fine furniture and pictures. When he took a fancy to anything he saw in a neighbour's or any stranger's house, he invariably offered the owner something of his own in exchange. Should the owner decline the proposal, Michail Maximovitsch, if he happened to be in a good humour, would then offer to buy the coveted possession. If this were also refused, he simply remarked he would have the article for nothing. And he would shortly make his appearance surrounded by his brigand retainers, and take the object by force. Complaints in a court of justice were of no avail, for the police were perfectly aware that any official who dared to take the step of following up a complaint by a visit of enquiry, would soon make a close acquaintance The end of all these affairs was that with the Cat. Kurolesov was left in undisturbed possession of his ill-gotten goods, while the unlucky owner as often as not would be nearly beaten to death in his own house, in the presence of his family, who would be eech mercy in vain. Even worse acts of violence were committed, likewise with impunity. After a time Michail Maximovitsch made attempts to con-

ciliate his victims; he either gave them money, or forced them by threats to promise not to bring any farther claim against him: and thus the stolen property became legally his. When carousing with his friends, he was fond of boasting that the little portrait in the gold frame, hanging there on the wall, had been taken by him from such-and-such a gentleman; the writing table with gilt-bronze mounts from another; the silver cup out of which he was drinking from a third; and it was not an uncommon thing that the men named were actually sitting at the table, either pretending to hear nothing, or stifling their anger and joining in the general laughter which followed these confessions. Michail Maximovitsch had nerves of iron, and could drink an amazing quantity of brandy without losing his wits. Drunkenness never stupified him, it excited him and aroused a demoniac activity in his disordered brain and deranged organisation. When he was fully primed with drink, his greatest delight was to have horses harnessed to every available vehicle in the place, fill these with his guests and servants, and then, amid the tinkling of the horses' bells and the wild songs and shrieks of the whole company, to dash at full gallop over the neighbouring plains and through the villages. A good supply of brandy was always taken on these excursions, and it was one of his jokes to invite anyone he met, irrespective of age or sex, to drink with him. Should the wayfarer refuse the favour, he or she got a thrashing. The offenders were tied to trees, posts, or fences, regardless of rain or cold. I refrain from relating other and more revolting stories. . . . In such a frame of mind as this he galloped one day through a village. As he dashed past a threshing-floor, where a peasant and his family were busy threshing, he noticed a woman of singular beauty. "Halt!" shouted Michail Maximovitsch to his servants. "What do you say to this woman, Petruschka?" "The deuce!" cried Petruschka, "she is far too good-looking!" "Will you marry her?" "How can I marry another man's wife?" retorted Petruschka, laughing. "You'll soon see how, Hey, children! Seize her, and pack her into my carriage!" Away they flew to the next parish and in spite of the poor woman's protestations that she already had a husband and two children, she was then and there married

to Petruschka. No one dared report this crime to any magistrate, and it was only in later years, when the property came into the hands of the younger Bagrov, that the woman and her husband and children were restored to the real owner; her first husband was long since dead. Bagrov returned a great deal of stolen property to the original owners, but a large portion was never claimed by anyone and mouldered away in lumber rooms. I suspect the reader will find it difficult to believe that the commission of such open crimes was possible in Russia, and only eighty years ago; but there is no doubt as to the accuracy of my tale.

But however infamous this unbridled debauchery and boundless tyranny were, something still more horrible developed in Michail Maximovitsch's disposition—an everincreasing instinct of cruelty and lust of blood. To torture men became an obsession with him. When he had no victim to flog, he grew peevish, restless, even ill: hence his visits to Tschurasovo became shorter and less frequent. But once back at his beloved Paraschino, and he hastened to make up for lost time. Examination and regulation of all domestic affairs furnished him with rich opportunities to inflict punishment: for the slightest irregularity was dealt with in the most barbarous manner: and where is the household where some small fault or act of neglect cannot be found, if it is only sought? In a general way, the whole weight of his tyranny fell almost exclusively on the house servants. It was very rarely, and then only under exceptional circumstance, that he would permit a peasant to be flogged; and in consequence the stewards and overseers had as much to suffer at his hands as the household. He spared no one, and every one in his personal service had been at least once, and not infrequently several times, beaten nearly to death. It is a fact that Michail Maximovitsch would never order anyone to be flogged when he himself was in a furious passion and screaming with rage, as frequently happened: when he wished to practice his barbarity on anyone, he would address him in a calm, almost gentle, tone, after this manner: "Now, my dear friend, Grigori Kusmitsch, I am very sorry indeed to have to do it, but we have a little business to settle between us." With words such as these, he would turn to his head-groom,

Koyliaga, who, God knows why, was the person most frequently entrusted with the execution of his vile practices. "Let the pussy-cat scratch him!" he would say, smiling at the other servants, and then would begin a long torture for the unfortunate which Michail Maximovitsch would witness. as he sat comfortably drinking his tea mixed with brandy. smoking his pipe, and cracking jokes about the sufferer, as long as the latter was conscious. Credible witnesses have assured me that the sole means of restoring life to the miserable victims was by wrapping the freshly-stripped skins of slaughtered sheep round their bleeding bodies. After gloating his full on the tortured man, Michail Maximovitsch would be sated with the spectacle, and would say: "Enough; carry him off!" and for the rest of the day, and sometimes even for several days, would be especially cheerful and even amiable. But just to finish off the characteristics of this monster, I will add one of his precepts that he was wont to impress upon his boon companions: "I object to sticks and knouts," he often remarked, "you can so easily kill a man with them before anyone has had time to enjoy anything. That's why I prefer my kitten, she makes folks smart and is not dangerous." I have not told the tenth part of what I know of this man's doings, but I think I have told more than enough. I must not forget, however, to observe that a singular freak of human nature was manifested in Michail Maximovitsch, who, throughout all his paroxysms of sayagery and tyranny, was busily occupied with the building of his fine stone church at Paraschino. At the time reached in my narrative, the outside fabric of the church was already completed, while the whole of his own dwelling house was crowded with carpenters, wood-carvers, gilders, painters, etc., etc., who were busy with the beautiful inside decorations.

Praskovia Ivanovna had now been married about fourteen years, and if she noticed anything strange in her husband's manner, who very, very seldom came to see her now, she was still very far from knowing, or even suspecting, his true character. She led her usual quiet and happy life. In the summer she tended her luxuriant gardens and her beautiful gushing springs, which she would never suffer to be enclosed, and which she herself would dredge and clear from all

obstructions. In winter she was greatly in request among her hosts of friends, and she had grown passionately fond of card-playing. Suddenly a letter arrived from a relative of her husband, an old lady for whom she entertained a great regard. The letter contained a full and detailed account of all Michail Maximovitsch's outrageous doings: and in conclusion, the writer explained that she considered it nothing short of a crime to leave the mistress of a thousand souls in ignorance of the condition of her retainers—crushed as they were beneath the tyranny of her own husband—when it was a simple matter for her to rescue them by depriving the madman of all authority. The blood of the innocent victims cried to Heaven, she wrote, and her own personal servant. Ivan Anufriev was lying at death's door, in consequence of Kurolesov's ill-treatment. As for Praskovia Ivanovna, she need have no fear about acting; she was under the protection of the Governor and her own good friends, and Michail Maximovitsch would never dare to come to Tschurasovo. The letter had the effect of a thunderbolt on Praskovia Ivanovna. She has often told me that, for a few minutes after reading it, she remained as if unconscious. But her extra ordinary strength of character and her firm trust in God came to her aid; her agony of soul was conquered, and she resolved on a plan of action over which many a bold man would have hesitated. She ordered the horses to be put in her calash, giving an urgent errand to the Government capital as a pretext, and set straightway out for Paraschinoaccompanied only by one man-servant, and a maid. The journey was long, more than four hundred versts, and she had plenty of time to reflect on the danger of the step she was taking. But as Praskovia Ivanovna was wont to relate in after days, she made no plans, and came to no decision on the way. She wished to see, with her own eyes, how her husband really spent his time when on his estates. The frightful letter of the old lady had not entirely convinced her of his guilt, as the writer lived at a great distance, and possibly might have been misled by exaggerated reports. She had not liked to question her old nurse at Tschurasovo. The idea of personal danger never even entered her mind; her husband had always been so uniformly kind and loving

towards her, that it appeared to her quite a simple matter to persuade Michail Maximovitsch to return to Tschurasovo with her. She arrived—as she had intended to arrive—at Paraschino late in the evening, left her carriage at the boundary fence, and went very softly, accompanied only by her two servants, through all the outbuildings to the back door of the wing of the house, where she saw lights and from whence issued a confused medley of songs, shouts and laughter. Her hand never trembled as she opened the door. The scene which presented itself to her gaze lacked nothing to prove the manner of life led by her husband. Even tipsier than usual, he sat drinking with his already drunken guests. Clad in a red silk shirt, his face a mask of coarse sensuality. he grasped a glass of punch in one hand, while his left arm encircled the waist of a beautiful woman who was seated in his lap. Before him sang and danced the whole household of half-intoxicated servants. Praskovia Ivanovna took everything in with a glance—almost fainting she tottered back, shut the door behind her, and left the house. Outside, on the steps, she met one of her husband's servants, an elderly—and fortunately sober-man. He recognised his mistress and exclaimed: "Little mother, Praskovia Ivanovna, is it you?" Here Praskovia Ivanovna made signs to him to keep silence. until they reached the middle of the court-yard, when she spoke to him in very severe tones: "So this is the way you all spend your time here! Your merry life shall soon come to an end!" The man threw himself at her feet, and weeping. exclaimed: "Little mother, do you really believe we have merry lives here? God Himself has sent you!" Praskovia Ivanovna again ordered him to be quiet, and to shew her where Ivan Anufriev, whom she heard was still alive was lying ill. She was conducted to the covered cattle-sheds. and there, in a hut near the cows' stalls, she found the dving Anufriev. He was so exhausted that he was unable to speak a word. But his brother Alexei, a poor youth who had been unmercifully flogged on the preceding day, crawled slowly and painfully from his pallet of straw, knelt down, and told the dreadful stories of his brother, himself, and many others.1

¹ Ivan Anufriev did not die, but lived to be fifty years old, his brother however never recovered from the effects of the ill-treatment, and died a year later.

Praskovia's heart was like to break with pity and horror: her conscience reproached her bitterly, and she resolved to make a speedy end to Michail Maximovitsch's cruel reigna simple matter, as she then thought. She gave strict orders that the master should not be informed of her arrival; and. as she heard that in the unfinished part of the great house there was a quite habitable room, where Michail Maximovitsch was accustomed to despatch business and regulate his accounts, she resolved to spend the rest of the night there, intending to talk to her husband in the morning. when he should be sober. But the report of her arrival had already got abroad. One of the most sinister of Michail Maximovitsch's companions whispered a word in his master's In an instant Kurolesov's intoxication vanished: he recognised his danger. Although he knew but little of his wife's masculine character, having so far done nothing to bring it into play, still he had a suspicion of her real strength of mind. He dismissed his drunken crew, two pails of cold water were dashed over his head, and, refreshed in mind and body, he dressed himself decently and tried to ascertain whether his wife was asleep or not. Already he had resolved on his plan of action. He was quite convinced, and rightly too, that someone had informed Praskovia Ivanovna of his conduct; and not being quite satisfied as to the truth of the tale, she had come to see the state of things for herself. He knew that she had been a witness of the midnight revels: but what he did not know was that she had seen Ivan Anufriev and spoken to Alexei. In spite of the nocturnal Saturnalia, he still hoped to make his peace with her. prepared to play the part of the repentant sinner with great pathos, to appeal to his wife's affection, and to get her out of Paraschino as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile the morning dawned and the sun rose. Michail Maximovitsch went softly to Praskovia Ivanovna's room, opened the door cautiously, and saw from the condition of the bed, hastily prepared for her overnight, that it had never been occupied. He gazed into the interior of the chamber. Praskovia Ivanovna knelt weeping and praying to the cross on the spire of the newly-built church, which could be seen glittering against the sky from the open

window, as there was no ikon suspended in the room. After a pause. Kurolesov addressed his wife quite gaily, and said: "My dearest, you have prayed quite long enough! Now what put it into your head to pay me this delightful visit?" Praskovia Ivanovna rose to her feet, and without losing any of her composure refused her husband's embrace, while in cold and severe tones she told him that she knew everything and had seen Ivan Anufriev. Relentlessly she expressed her utter abhorrence of the bloodthirsty wretch, and told him that henceforth he was no husband of hers. She informed him that he must instantly deliver up the power of attorney for the administration of all her estates, and leave Paraschino: should be ever venture to shew himself in her presence again, or even be seen upon any of her land, she would inform the Government of his misdeeds and have him sent to penal servitude in Siberia. Michail Maximovitsch was not prepared for this sort of talk. He fairly foamed with rage. "How dare you speak to me like this!" he bellowed. "Very good, my little pigeon! Then I can speak to you in a different tone. You shall never leave Paraschino until you have given me a deed-of-purchase of the whole of your estates. If you do not agree to this, you may go and starve in the cellar." And without more ado, he seized a stick which stood in a corner. threw his Praskovia violently on the floor, and beat her until she lost consciousness. Then, calling some of his trusty servants, he bade them carry the mistress down to the vault, fastened the door with a massive padlock, and put the key in his pocket. All the household were summoned to his presence, and in the most stern and threatening tones he enquired who had conducted Praskovia Ivanovna to the cattle-sheds. But that guilty person had long since absconded. and Praskovia's coachman and manservant had fled with him; only the servant maid could not make up her mind to abandon her mistress. Michail Maximovitsch did not hurt the girl, but, giving her some instructions as to how to persuade her lady to listen to reason, he himself locked her up in the cellar with Praskovia. And what did the monster then? He recommenced his orgies with the most unbounded zest. But in vain he swallowed his brandy, in vain his besotted crew of servants danced and sang around him, . . . Michail

Maximovitsch grew gloomy and uneasy. Still this gloom in no way discouraged him from pursuing his purpose in the most indefatigable way. He had a legal deed-of-purchase of the estates of Paraschino and Kurolesovo drawn up in the name of one of his worthy friends, and duly executed in the neighbouring district town. As an act of grace, Tschurasovo was left in Praskovia's possession. Twice a day he visited his wife in the cellar and tried to persuade her to sign the deed. He entreated her to pardon him for his violence, which was the act of a moment of rage; promised never to come near her if she would only consent; and assured her that in the event of his death all should be left to her. But Praskovia Ivanovna, aching from his blows, exhausted by hunger, and ravaged by fever, would not give up her rights. So passed five days. Heaven alone knows how it all might have ended.

All this time Stepan Michailovitsch was living tranquilly in his New Bagrovo, about a hundred and twenty versts distant from Paraschino. I have already said that he had long since been perfectly reconciled to Michail Maximovitsch and, although he had no special liking for the man, still on the whole he was quite satisfied with his behaviour. On his side. Kurolesov always treated my grandfather and his whole family with the greatest respect and politeness. Since the establishment of Paraschino, and his own residence on that estate, he had paid a yearly visit to Bagrovo, on which occasions he was exceedingly pleasant and amiable; consulted Stepan Michailovitsch, as one experienced in all matters concerned with settlements and emigration; took notes of all he heard, for which he expressed extreme gratitude; and knew, too, how to profit by the information. Twice he had invited Stepan Michailovitsch to visit him at Paraschino, in order to see for himself how his advice had been followed. My grandfather was quite enchanted by the perfection of the new estate, and. on his last visit, after examining all the fields and buildings, had exclaimed: "Well, friend Michail, you are young, but already a master farmer: you have nothing more to learn from me!" And, in truth, Kurolesov's management of the estate left nothing to be desired. As may well be imagined. he parted from his old guest with every conceivable expression of regard and respect. After a few years, however.

unfavourable reports of Kurolesov began to be whispered in Bagrovo. At first these rumours were never mentioned in my grandfather's hearing, as he would never tolerate any slander or scandal: all the same, the rumours grew and increased. Stepan Michailovitsch's family got to hear about Kurolesov's behaviour, and one fine day Arina Vasilievna resolved to enlighten her husband as to the sort of debauched life led by Michail Maximovitsch. The old man refused to believe the report, and said that if anyone chose to pay heed to gossip he might expect to hear the vilest tales about his neighbours. "I am only too well aware," he added, " of the sort of folks the Bakteievian peasants are—a pack of lazy neer-do-weels and sluggards: even my brother's own serfs were ruined by those women. Small wonder that they find regular work burdensome! Perhaps Michail has changed everything a little too suddenly, but the fellows ought to be accustomed to the new management by now. And if he does take a drop too much now and then, after slaving himself nearly to death, it's no very great crime for a man, especially if it doesn't lead him to neglect his work. What you have told me would be disgusting enough, if it were true, but it is nothing but a pack of lies; and I cannot understand how you and your daughters can listen to such servants' tittle tattle!" After this withering reply no one ventured to refer to the subject again. Eventually, however, certain peasants who had formerly belonged to the Bagrov family, who from time to time came to visit their relations at New-Bagrovo, brought the most frightful tales of their master's cruelty. Arina Vasilievna thereupon tackled her husband a second time, and entreated him to interview the parish magistrate of Paraschino, a former Bagrov peasant himself, and a man whose integrity and veracity were beyond all question. This man was on a visit to New-Bagrovo, and my grandfather consented to see him. After hearing the magistrate's tale of horror, which fairly made his hair stand on end. my grandfather was completely at a loss how to act. It was very rarely indeed that he heard from Praskovia Ivanovna, and when he had news she seemed to be perfectly happy and peaceful. Evidently she suspected nothing of her husband's conduct. He himself, in earlier days, had advised her never to

permit anyone to criticise her husband's behaviour in her presence; and he now perceived that his counsel had been only too well observed. Moreover he reflected that if she were informed of the actual state of affairs, she could do nothing to help, and the knowledge would only cause her useless pain. Under the circumstances he preferred to let her remain in ignorance. He always had the utmost objection to interfering in anyone's business, and in the case of Kurolesov he considered it quite unnecessary. "May he break his neck, or be called up for a criminal enquiry,—and serve him right, too. Only God Himself can cure the fellow. He treats his peasants decently, and if he knocks the house-servants about, they are a lot of idle vagabonds who deserve what they get. I am not going to be mixed up with any disgusting tales." With this resolve my grandfather let the matter rest. He contented himself by not replying to Kurolesov's letters and by ceasing to hold any communication with him. The latter understood perfectly what was meant by this and left the old gentleman alone. The correspondence between Stepan Michailovitsch and Praskovia Ivanovna, however, grew more frequent and more affectionate than ever.

Such was the state of affairs when suddenly the three fugitives from Paraschino made their appearance at New-Bagrovo. The day following their escape had been spent in the impenetrable, marshy forests which lay around the great threshing-ground of Paraschino. During the night they had received secret visits from peasants on the estate, who had told them all that had happened to their mistress; and they had hurried direct to Stepan Michailovitsch, as Praskovia Ivanovna's natural protector. One may well imagine the state of Stepan Michailovitsch's mind when he heard of the happenings at Paraschino. He loved his cousin as dearly, if not indeed more dearly, than his own daughters. Praskovia cruelly used by her ruthless husband. Praskovia starving in a damp dungeon—perhaps already dead—the awful picture stood so clearly before his eyes that the old man sprang to his feet almost beside himself with agony, and, rushing through the courtyard and into the village, summoned his serfs and servants together. All crowded round him: the labourers quitted the fields: all-sharing the sorrow and anxiety of

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their beloved master-cried with one voice that they would accompany him and rescue Praskovia Ivanovna. In less than two hours three great wagons, to which my grandfather's own fiery stallions were harnessed, were dashing on their way to Paraschino. They carried twelve of the sturdiest young men among the peasantry and servants, as well as the refugees from Paraschino, who were armed with muskets, swords, pikes, and pitch-forks. Towards evening two similar wagons set out, drawn by the pick of the peasants' horses, and each containing ten men similarly equipped, ready to help Stepan Michailovitsch in case of need. On the evening of the following day the first expedition halted only seven versts distant from Paraschino; the weary horses were baited, and, in the first twilight of the summer dawn, the carts clattered into the wide courtvard of the mansion, and drew up before the door of the vault, close to the neighbouring building occupied by Kurolesov. Stepan Michailovitsch sprang to the door, and knocked loudly. From within a feeble voice said: "Who is there?" My grandfather recognised the voice of his cousin, and weeping for joy at finding her still living, crossed himself and shouted: "God be praised! It is I—your cousin—Stepan Michailovitsch. You have nothing to fear now!" He instantly gave the servants orders to find Praskovia's calash and harness the horses, and six armed men were told off to guard the approach to the cellar, while he himself, with the assistance of the rest, broke in the door with axes and crowbars. This was but the work of a moment. Stepan Michailovitsch took Praskovia Ivanovna in his arms, laid her in the cart between himself and her faithful maid, and went tranquilly away with his armed retinue. The sun had just risen, and its glittering rays illuminated the golden cross on the church spire. It was but six days ago that Praskovia Ivanovna had prayed to that cross: now she prayed to it once more, and with tears of gratitude for her wonderful deliverance. Five versts beyond Paraschino they were overtaken by the calash. and Stepan Michailovitsch and his cousin continued their journey in it to Bagrovo.

And how could all this come about you will ask? Had no one witnessed their arrival? Where were Michail Maximo-ovitsch and his trusty band? Had he seen and heard nothing.

or was he absent? No! Many there heard the uproar, and witnessed the rescue of Praskovia. Michail Maximovitsch was at home, knew perfectly well what was happening, and had not dared to cross the threshold of his own house.

The facts were as follows. The servants had spent the greater part of the night drinking with their master, and it was impossible to awaken a great number of them. Kurolesov's favourite servant, who never drank spirits, and who, consequently, was perfectly sober, had great difficulty in rousing his drunken master. Trembling with fear, he informed him of the arrival of Stepan Michailovitsch, and of the row of guns levelled at the house. "Where are our men?" enquired Michail Maximovitsch. "Some of them are asleep, and the rest have hidden themselves," replied the servant, but he lied, for at that moment a drunken crew gathered at the door of the room. Michail Maximovitsch regained his senses somewhat, and shrieked: "May the Devil fly away with you! Shut all the doors, and observe what happens through the window!" In a minute or two the servant exclaimed: "They have battered the door down. . . . Now they are carrying off the mistress. . . . They are going!" "Be off to bed!" retorted Michail Maximovitsch, covered himself up with the quilt, and went to sleep or pretended to do so.

Ah yes, there is a moral power in good which overcomes the might of evil. Michail Maximovitsch recognised the steady and intrepid courage of Stepan Michailovitsch: he felt that he had only wrong on his side, and, in spite of his desperate and bold character, he dare not attempt to snatch his victim from her deliverer.

With what loving and anxious care was the poor suffering little cousin brought home by Stepan Michailovitsch! His love and pity for Praskovia were redoubled. He refrained from asking her any questions on the journey home, and, when Bagrovo was reached, he forbade his family to weary her by any sort of conversation. Her marvellous constitution, however, and equally marvellous strength of character together sufficed to restore her to her wonted good health by the end of a fortnight. This being the case, Stepan Michailovitsch determined to ask for a full account of what had happened to her, it being absolutely necessary that he should

know the truth about the whole affair, as he was not one to attach importance to any but authentic histories. Praskovia Ivanovna told him all, reserving nothing; but at the same time entreated him not to let her relatives know anything about the affair, and also expressed a wish that the subject should be allowed to drop. Knowing the irascible nature of her cousin as she did, she begged him not to take any revenge on Michail Maximovitsch, telling him candidly that she had reconsidered her former decision, and had resolved not to expose her husband and thereby bring dishonour upon a name which was her own as long as life lasted. She added that she regretted the words spoken to her husband on their first meeting, and was determined not to lay any charge against him: all the same she recognised it as her bounden duty to release her retainers as soon as possible from his merciless tyranny, and therefore intended to withdraw all authority from Kurolesov, and appoint her cousin as sole administrator of her estates. She begged Stepan Michailovitsch to write a letter at once to Michail Maximovitsch, reclaiming the power-of-attorney given to the latter: in the event of the request being refused, she would then give orders to have it legally annulled. She expressed the wish that the letter should spare her husband's pride as much as possible; but in order to give it full weight and significance, she desired to put her own signature to it. And here I must add that she could only write very bad Russian. Stepan Michailovitsch was so devoted to her that he restrained his just anger, and carried out all her wishes faithfully. Only in one matter did he refuse to oblige her, the control of her property. "I dislike meddling in other folks' business," said he, "and I don't wish your relatives to be able to say that I make a good thing out of your thousand serfs. Your affairs are bound to be mismanaged now, but you are rich enough not to make a trouble of it. On my own account, though, I will write and tell your rascal of a husband that I am taking over the management of the estates, just to give him the fright he deserves. As for anything else that you ask; I am only too pleased to do it for you." As the result of this conference he strictly forbade any of his family to ask Praskovia any questions. The letter to Michail Maximovitsch was duly written by my grandfather :

Praskovia Ivanovna added a few words, and a messenger took it to Paraschino. But while all these consultations and decisions and letter-writing were in process of happening. the Paraschino matter had been closed, once and for all. At the end of four days, the messenger returned with the news that God had willed that Michail Maximovitsch should die a sudden death, and that he was already in his grave. On hearing these tidings Stepan Michailovitsch involuntarily crossed himself, and exclaimed: "Thank God!" His wife and daughters, who, in spite of their previous partiality for Michail Maximovitsch now as cordially detested him, also praised Heaven for this deliverance. Not so Praskovia. Judging of her feelings in the matter by their own, everyone hastened to tell her the news, which they expected her to receive with great joy. But their astonishment was great for the news was like a thunderbolt: she fell into a state of the deepest despondency, and became ill again. Once more her strong constitution got the better of her malady, but she continued melancholy and depressed. For many weeks she wept incessantly, and she wasted away to such an extent that her cousin was filled with anxious forebodings. No one could comprehend such grief and such bitter tears shed for a man who was of the veriest dregs of humanity, and who had forfeited all claim to her affection by his inhuman treatment of her. This may help to explain the mystery.

Some ten years after the foregoing events, my mother— (who was a great favourite of Praskovia Ivanovna, and who had been listening with the deepest interest to an account of the tragedy, of which Praskovia Ivanovna spoke but seldom and then only to her most intimate friends)—said: "Tell me, dearest Aunt, why did you grieve so over the death of Michail Maximovitsch? In your place I should have commended his soul to the mercy of God, and have been rejoiced to be rid of him." "Stupid child!" replied Praskovia Ivanovna, "I had loved him for fourteen long years: such a love is not destroyed in a month. And what concerns me most is the welfare of his soul: he died with no time for repentance."

Six weeks after the death of Kurolesov, Praskovia Ivanovna regained somewhat of her ordinary composure. She went, accompanied by her cousin and the whole family, to

Paraschino to repeat the customary prayers for the dead. It astonished everyone that, on reaching Paraschino, and even during the sorrowful ceremony, Praskovia Ivanovna never shed a tear—an effort which taxed her shattered mind and enfeebled frame to the utmost degree. In deference to her wishes the party only remained a few hours at Paraschino, and she herself never entered the wing of the house occupied by her late husband, in which he died.

It is not difficult to guess how Kurolesov's sudden death was brought about. After Praskovia's rescue, every soul on the estate was firmly convinced that the master's reign would soon come to an end. All were extremely anxious that the old master of Bagrovo, their mistress' second father, would turn her good-for-nothing husband out of the estate. No one had the slightest doubt that the ill-used and insulted young mistress would hesitate a moment in setting the law in motion against the criminal. Each day they momentarily expected Stepan Michailovitsch and the officers of justice to make their appearance; but one week followed another, and no one came. Michail Maximovitsch drank and raved as usual, flogged everyone who approached him-(even his quiet sober-living servant, who had awakened him and warned him of Praskovia's deliverance)—because he had been thus left in the lurch. He boasted that his wife had settled all her property legally upon him. The cup of human endurance was overflowing: the future promised no hope, and so it came about that two scoundrels of his bodyguard—and, be it noted, amongst those persons who had the least to dread from his cruelty—carried out a frightful plan: they poisoned him with arsenic, which they mixed with the kvass which he was accustomed to drink during the night. They put such a quantity of poison into the decanter, that Kurolesov only lived two hours after drinking from it. The criminals had no accomplices, and the awful event filled everyone with indescribable terror. Each one suspected the other, but for a long time the real culprits remained undiscovered. Six months later, one of these fell ill, and, when near death, confessed his crime. His fellowmurderer, although the dying man had not disclosed his name, fled, and disappeared leaving no trace.

There is not the slightest doubt that this sudden death of

Kurolesov would have been followed by a strict judicial enquiry, had it not happened that a short time previously he had removed a young secretary, bearing the same name as his own, from Tschurasovo, and established him in the counting house at Paraschino. This young man acted with remarkable promptitude and prudence, and succeeded in hushing up the affair. As one result of his good offices he was eventually appointed administrator of the whole of Praskovia Ivanovna's estates, and—as Michailuschka—he became known and respected far and near in the Governments of Orenburg and Simbirsk. This worthy and indefatigable steward amassed a considerable fortune, and for a long time led a most temperate he received his freedom after Praskovia Ivanovna's death: but the loss of his beloved wife drove him to drink—he wasted all his savings and died in poverty. One of his sons, however, had a brilliant career in Government service, and, if I recollect aright, was raised to the rank of a noble.

I cannot deny that even forty years afterwards, when Stepan Michailovitsch's grandson succeeded to the estate of Paraschino, he found the memory of Michail Maximovitsch still held in affection by the peasantry. His barbarity, which, after all, had been principally practised upon the household staff, was quite forgotten. On the other hand, the unerring sagacity with which he could pick out the guilty from the innocent—the good from the bad labourers, his disinterested efforts to improve the condition of the serfs, and his readiness to help anyone in genuine need, were recollected, and extolled. The old men would smile as they told the following story of him: It seems Kurolesov was accustomed to say: "Rob and betray me as much as you like, so long as I know nothing about it: but if I catch you—don't complain!"

After her return to Bagrovo, Praskovia Ivanovna gradually recovered her health, consoled by the fervent affection of her cousin and the kindly care of the whole family, who expected to see a great change in her. This however was not the case, her former good health was restored, her broken heart was healed, and at the end of a year she decided to return to Tschurasovo. Stepan Michailovitsch was grieved to part with his cousin. He felt himself especially responsible for her well-being, and he had grown accustomed to her constant

companionship: never once in his life had he really been angry with her. Notwithstanding this, he in no way sought to persuade her to remain, but rather urged her to take her departure. "What sort of a life is this for you, my dear cousin?" he was wont to ask. "Life here is very dull; we don't mind it, because we have never been used to any other. But you are still young;" (she was thirty years old), "you are rich, and accustomed to a very different style of living. Go back to Tschurasovo, and to your fine house and gardens and fountains. There are plenty of rich friends there who are fond of you and will help you to be happy. Who knows but you may make a happy marriage yet. At any rate you must not lose your chances here."

Praskovia Ivanovna postponed her departure from day to day, finding it difficult to part from the cousin who had rescued her from a terrible fate, and who had been her kind friend from her earliest childhood. But at last the day was fixed. The preceding day she had risen very early and gone to Stepan Michailovitsch who was sitting on the balcony, sunk in melancholy meditation. She embraced him, weeping, and said: "Cousin, I know how much you love me, and I love and honour you as my own father. God, who reads all hearts. knows my gratitude. But I wish everyone to know it, and so I beg of you to let me settle the estates which my mother left me on you. My father's estates, in any case, will go to your boy Alexei. All my relations on my mother's side are rich; and you know there is no just reason why I should leave my property to them. I shall never marry again. I want the Bagrov family to be rich. Now, consent, dear cousin, if you wish me to be happy, and easy in my mind!" And with these words she sank down at his feet, covering his hands with kisses. "Listen to me, cousin," replied Stepan Michailovitsch in a stern tone, "you know little of me, or you would never propose that I should accept another's property, or deprive your legitimate heirs of their own. No one shall ever tell that tale of Stepan Bagrov. Take heed that you never mention the subject to me again, or I shall be angry with you, for the first time in my life!"

On the following day Praskovia Ivanovna set out on her journey to Tschurasovo, where she began a new and independent life.

SKETCH III

THE MARRIAGE OF THE YOUNGER BAGROV

Many years had passed, much had happened: famine and pestilence, and the terrible rebellion of Pugatschev.1 wild bands had ravaged Orenburg. My grandfather fled with his family, first to Samara, then down the Volga to Saratov, and even as far as Astrachan. But gradually all these evils had passed away, peace was restored, and all was forgotten. Children had become youths; youths-men; and mengrey-beards. And among these last was Stepan Michailovitsch. He could not fail to notice it, but could still hardly believe it was so. Not seldom he would remark: "Yes, indeed, much has floated away with the waters of spring," and spoke as calmly as if referring to anyone but himself. In truth my grandfather was a changed man. Where were now his heroic strength, his activity and tireless energy? He himself sometimes admitted his amazement at the change, but still continued his old mode of life, ate and drank to his heart's content, dressed himself without any regard to the weather; and often had to suffer for his recklessness, too. His keen, sparkling eyes grew dimmer and dimmer, and his mighty voice weaker. He seldom fell into a passion now; and seldom indeed was he happy and cheerful. He had married off his elder daughters: the eldest, Madame Vierigina, was dead, leaving a little three-year-old daughter. The second, Madame Koptjascheva, had lost her first husband and was married again to a Monsieur Nagatkin. The proud and intellectual Jelisaveta had become the wife of General Erlykin—and it must be admitted that the General was poor, old, and always in a state of intoxication. Alexandra had married one Ivan

¹ Pugatschev, Jemeljan: (1726-75). The Cossack who pretended to be the Czar, Peter III. [Tr.]

Petrovitsch Karataiev, a young man of rank and wealth, but a Bashkir of Bashkirs, and passionately devoted to the life and habits of that race. The youngest daughter, Tania, was still at home. The only son was already twenty-seven years old, a bonnie red-cheeked fellow. His father often remarked that he only needed a petticoat and bodice to be as fine a young lady as any of his sisters. In spite of the bitter tears and lamentations of his wife, Stepan Michailovitsch had permitted his son—when sixteen years old—to enter military service, where he remained for three years. Through Kurolesov's influence he was appointed orderly to Suvorov for a whole vear. But Suvorov quitted Orenburg, and a German general (Treublut, if I mistake not) permitted the poor and quite innocent young man-in spite of his noble birth too-to be most unmercifully flogged. My grandmother nearly died with grief, and my grandfather quite failed to appreciate this kind of joke. He made Alexei ask for his discharge at once, and procured him a post in the Supreme High Court, which he filled very efficiently for many years, eventually becoming a State Agent.

And here I cannot help mentioning a very singular fact. The majority of Germans—(and other foreigners for the matter of that)—who enter Russian State Service are characterized by their extreme severity and predilection for flogging. This same German, who behaved so inhumanly towards young Bagrov, although himself a strict Lutheran, exacted the minutest observance of the rites of the Greek Church from the regiment. This was actually the occasion of the aforesaid dismal episode in our family chronicles. It being the eve of some insignificant festival, the German general had commanded vespers to be read in the regimental church in the presence of himself and the other officers. The windows of the church stood wide open, as the heat of the summer's day was excessive. Suddenly, from the main street of Ufa, resounded the merry strains of a Russian folksong: the general rushed to a window. Three young non-commissioned officers came down the street, one of whom was singing. The general had all three instantly arrested and ordered three hundred strokes to be administered to each man. My unlucky father, who was not the songster, and had only accompanied the

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other sergeants, tried to explain that he was a noble, on which the General, with a diabolical grin, retorted that it was a nobleman's duty to pay especial deference to the worship of God. And then and there he had the punishment carried out in his presence in a room adjoining the church, warning my father not to cry out and disturb the congregation next door. My father was carried half-dead to the infirmary, where his uniform had to be cut away from his body, which was swollen from the flogging. It was fully two months before the wounds on his back and shoulders were healed. You may picture the agony of his mother who was devotedly attached to him. My grandfather brought a complaint against the General, which was ignored; but as soon as his son was able to leave hospital, his discharge, which he had solicited. was at once granted, and he entered the service of the State as an official of the Fourteenth Class. At the time of our story the whole affair was forgotten, after a lapse of some eight years.

Alexei Stepanovitsch fulfilled his government work very tranquilly in Ufa, which lay two hundred and forty versts from Bagrovo. Twice a year he paid a visit to his parents. Life for him contained no adventures, either at home or abroad. Quiet, diffident, and unassuming, friendly with all, he lived as solitary as a field-flower, when suddenly the placid stream of the young country squire's life was ruffled.

In the town of Ufa, the Vice-Regent, Councillor Nikolai Feodorovitsch Subin, a learned and upright, but weak and vacillating, man, had his permanent residence. He was a widower with three children, a twelve-year-old daughter Sonitschka¹ and two younger boys. The father loved his Sonitschka dearly, which was not surprising, as the little girl was remarkably pretty and clever, and, in spite of her extreme youth, a faithful friend and skilful manager of all household affairs. Nevertheless, some six months after the death of his first beloved wife, Nikolai Feodorovitsch was so completely consoled that he fell in love with the daughter of a neighbouring squire—Petrov Alexander Rytschkov, the well-known writer of Orenburg—and married her shortly afterwards. The young wife, Alexandra Petrovna, a beautiful,

Diminutive of Sofia. [Tr. S. R.]

intelligent, and imperious woman, held the weak-minded widower entirely under her sway, and developed an intense hatred for her young, but already beautiful, step-daughter. The condition of things came to this pass, that the character of Alexandra Petrovna manifested all the worst and most hateful qualities usually attributed to jealous step-mothers, and she determined to oust Sonitschka from her place in her father's affections. This was no easy matter, and the child offered such a stout resistance that she excited the stepmother's wrath to the very highest degree, so that she swore that the thirteen-year-old girl—the idol of her father and indeed of the whole city—should live in the servants' apartments, be dressed in cotton clothes, and perform the most menial tasks for her own unborn children. This threat she fulfilled literally: at the end of two or three years Sonitschka was living with the maid servants, was the worst dressed amongst them, and was set single-handed to clean and scrub the nursery in which already two new baby sisters were installed. And what of the tender father? For whole months at a stretch he never set eyes on his daughter; and if he chanced to encounter her—dressed like a beggar—he turned away and slunk off sighing to hide his tears. And so it is with many an old widower who takes to himself a young wife. I do not know what means Alexandra Petrovna employed to gain her evil ends, so I remain mute on this subject: neither do I care to reveal all the persecution and ill-treatment which the poor motherless girl, naturally of a proud sensitive. spirited, and intractable disposition, had to endure. The severest punishment was meted out to her, she was not even spared blows, and frequently was chastised when she had done nothing amiss. At last the unfortunate child resolved to commit suicide, and was only prevented from carrying out her intention by a miracle. It came about in this way. The poor girl, having made up her mind to put an end to her unendurable existence, entered her wretched attic up in the roof to pray for the last time before a picture of Our Lady of Smolensk with which her dying mother had blessed her. She fell on her knees before the sacred ikon, and, weeping bitterly, bowed her head upon the dirty floor. Thus prostrated, she lost consciousness for some moments. When she recovered her senses

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and rose to her feet, to her amazement a light shone upon her. Before the picture of the Mother of God the taper, which she had extinguished the day before, was alight. She cried out with terror, but, quickly recovering herself, recognised the hand of God in this miracle. From that moment a hitherto unknown strength and peace took possession of her soul and body, and she made a steadfast resolve to endure all, suffer all, and live. Henceforth the orphan suffered the persecutions of her step-mother with the most unshaken fortitude, although the latter did her utmost to insult and irritate her victim. She performed every task imposed upon her and bore every wrong with incredible calm. No abuse, no degrading punishment could wring a tear from her-far less produce the nervous attacks and fainting fits to which she had formerly been subject; and to her former title of "Vile creature" another epithet was added, whereby she became: "Vile, stubborn creature." But the patience of God was exhausted at last, and the bolt fell. The beautiful Alexandra Petroyna bore a son and died ten days after his birth. The day before her death, knowing her end to be approaching, she made what haste she could to free her conscience from its heavy load. Sonitschka was awakened in the middle of the night and bidden to her step-mother's bedside. There, in the presence of several witnesses, Alexandra Petrovna acknowledged her guilt, entreated her step-daughter's forgiveness, and made her swear before God that she would never forsake her children. The step-child forgave her, promised not to desert the children, and gave her solemn word thereon. Alexandra Petroyna then confessed to her husband that all the evil tales that she had told him about his daughter's conduct were lies and calumnies.

And what changes were wrought in the house by this death! Nikolai Feodorovitsch had a stroke, which he survived some years, but only as a bed-ridden invalid. The disgraced, degraded, ragged step-daughter, so long the scorn and derision of a base crew of menials, (especially those who had the ear of their late mistress), suddenly became absolute mistress of the house. Everything was entrusted to her by her sick father. The reconciliation between the guilty father and his innocent child was touching, but very painful to witness. The sting of

remorse gave the sick old man no rest or peace: he lay sobbing day and night, and could only stammer "No, Sonitschka, you can never forgive me!" To all and every one of his friends and acquaintances in the city he made a solemn confession of his conduct towards his daughter; and Sofia Nikolaievna became the object of universal respect and admiration. Early matured through the sufferings which she had endured, the seventeen-vear-old maiden filled the parts of woman, mother, house-keeper, and even that of an official. The helpless condition of her father compelled her to receive all the magistrates, officials, and similar residents in the city; and to transact all his state business for him. She wrote all his business letters, superintended everything, and soon was the sole director of the Court of Chancery. Meanwhile she tended her father with the most affectionate care, and watched like a mother over her three brothers and two little sisters. She succeeded in procuring instruction for the two elder boys. one of whom was now twelve, the other ten years old. She placed them under the care of a Frenchman, M. Villemé. whom chance had brought to the city, and under a fairly well-educated Little Russian, V-ski, who had been exiled to Ufa on account of some intrigue against the Government. She herself profited by these opportunities to study with her brothers, and made admirable progress. At the end of six months she sent her brothers to A. F. Anitschkov in Moscow. whose acquaintance she had made through one of his cousins who lived in Ufa, and with whom she carried on a brisk correspondence, although they had never met. At that time Anitschkov was living with the celebrated N. I. Novikov. The two friends were so enchanted by the delightful letters of the unknown girl in Bashkiria that they sent her every work of any literary value which was published in Russia, and this literature contributed not a little to the farther development of her intellect. Anitschkov, especially, was her ardent admirer, and was only too rejoiced to be able to carry out her wishes, by taking charge of her two brothers and using his influence for their admission into the University School for the nobility. The boys were diligent pupils. Unfortunately their studies were soon interrupted, as each had been nominated for entry into the Guards' Regiment at the time of his birth.

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Every cultured and intellectual person brought by chance or otherwise to the city was presented to Sofia, fell under her spell, and never forgot her. Most of these acquaintances later became her faithful friends, and continued friends until death. Among these I will only mention those whom it was my privilege to know: W. W. Romanovski, A. I. Avenarius, P. I. Tschitschagov, D. B. Mertwy, and W. I. Itschanski. In addition to all these, any learned or casual travellers who visited the new and ravishing District of Ufa never failed to make Sofia Nikolaievna's acquaintance, and to leave written tributes of their admiration and regard. In truth the position of this quite young girl was a highly enviable one, and placed her, as it were, upon a glittering pedestal. But this pedestal supported a glorious figure. In especial I recall a poem written by one Count Manteuffel, who sent her a copy of Buchan's Domestic Medecine. an early translation of the English work into Russian, which had created a great sensation. The five quarto volumes became Sofia Nikolaievna's favourite reading, and she discovered many remedies which relieved her father's sufferings. In his dedicatory poem Count Manteuffel compared the beautiful girl alike to Venus and to Minerva.

In spite of his invalid condition, Nikolai Feodorovitsch retained his post for some years longer. Twice a year he gave a great ball. He himself was not able to appear in the presence of ladies, but received the gentlemen, lying on a couch in his study. The young mistress received the whole society of the city and district. The old father insisted that Sonitschka should occasionally attend the balls given by the local notabilities. In order to please him Sofia Nikolaievna consented to appear for a short time at these balls. Charmingly dressed, the admired of everyone who saw her, she would dance a polonaise, a minuet, a country dance or an écossaise, and would vanish like a meteor. All who had a right to love her adored Sofia Nikolaievna with a devout and hopeless adoration, for it was considered an impossibility to touch the heart of the beautiful girl.

And the son of old Stepan Michailovitsch fell in love with this bewitching creature. He was not able to appreciate

¹ Domestic Medicine or The Family Physician, first published at Edinburgh in 1769, written by Dr. William Buchan (1729-1805). [Tr.]

every side of her lofty character; but her lovely person and kind and charming disposition were more than enough to enchant the young man, and make the spell complete. The very first time that he saw Sofia Nikolaievna in church his soft heart was won. As soon as he heard that the beautiful maiden received all the officials who came to visit her father. Alexei Stepanovitsch (it is high time we give him his full name), he began to be a constant visitor at the receptions held by the Vice-regent on all great festivals, which he attended in his capacity as an official of the Supreme Court. On each of these visits he saw Sofia Nikolaievna, and fell still more violently in love with her. The visits were so frequent and lasted so long, (although the young man scarcely ever ventured to open his mouth) that they could not fail to be remarked: and the young mistress of the house was the first to guess their meaning. Sighs and glances, glowing cheeks and embarrassed silences are invariably the eloquent signs of love. Everyone is inclined to laugh at love. It was ever thus, and the whole town made merry at Alexei Stepanovitsch's expense, while he, bashful and shamefaced as a country girl, could find no reply to their jokes and sly allusions, and only blushed as red as a poppy.

To everyone's amazement however Sofia Nikolaievna, hitherto so cold and distant toward all her adorers, treated the shy lover with condescending kindness. I cannot say whether she was moved to compassion for the poor youth whose passion occasioned such merriment to others, or whether she realised that such a love as his was no passing fancy, but a life-long affection. Be that as it may, the proud beauty not only received Alexei Stepanovitsch with great friendliness, but frequently talked to him, and seemed to find nothing laughable either in his bashful, incoherent replies or in his stammering speech. But I recollect that Sofia Nikolaievna was invariably haughty and unapproachable in her manner with the arrogant and self-satisfied, and kind and affable with the timid and humble.

Matters continued in this state for some time, and then, all of a sudden, a bold thought crossed Alexei Stepanovitsch's impassioned brain—the thought of marriage. He himself was positively terrified at the audacity of the idea. What

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was he in comparison with Sofia Nikolaievna—the person of greatest consequence in the city—the most beautiful and cleverest maiden in the whole world? Thinking thus, he gave up the idea in despair. But soon the thought revived, aroused by the friendly attitude of the lady herself, by her kind-and as it seemed to him-even encouraging glances and more by his own love, which grew warmer and warmer. At length, what had begun as a sweet dream became a necessary condition of life itself. An old lady of rank, Madame Alakaieva, who was living in Ufa in those days, shewed him the greatest sympathy and kindness. She was a distant relative of his own and a friend of the Subin family. He began by paying her frequent visits and complimenting her to the best of his ability, and ended by telling her his love and heart's desire. Madame Alakaieva had been aware of his love for long enough, as everyone in the town was talking about it; but his proposal to marry Sofia Nikolaievna astonished her extremely. "She would never dream of accepting you." said the old lady, shaking her head. "She is far too clever, and cultured, and proud for you. She has had numbers of lovers, but no one has dared to propose to her. I can't say but you are good-looking, and very well-born too. You have a little money and will be rich in time—no one can deny all this. But you are only a country squire, with no polish. no education, and utterly shy and awkward in society." All this was exactly what Alexei Stepanovitsch knew himself, but his love overruled his reason. Day and night a secret voice whispered in his ear that, in spite of all obstacles, Sofia would be his. Although Madame Alakaieva considered the young man's suit a hopeless one, she yielded to his entreaties to go herself to Sofia Nikolaievna, and without saying anything about the proposal to find out what her real feelings were towards her timid admirer. She set off immediately to the Subins' house, while poor Alexei Stepanovitsch anxiously awaited her return. The old lady was absent a considerable time, and the lover was so distracted by anxiety and melancholy that he burst into a flood of weeping, and at last, worn out by his emotion, fell asleep, leaning against the window. But at last the old lady returned home, woke him up, and said, smiling: "Well, Alexei Stepanovitsch, you were not

quite so mistaken, after all. I introduced you into our conversation, and began disparaging you; but Sofia Nikolaievna at once stood up for you, said that you were a good-hearted, modest, pious young man, who honoured and obeyed your parents, that God's blessing was on such men, and that they were worth any number of impudent fops put together." Alexei Stepanovitsch was nearly beside himself with joy and scarcely knew what he was doing or saying. When he was somewhat calmer, Madame Alakaieva, speaking with great seriousness, said: "If you have not changed your mind about this marriage, take my advice. Return home at once, tell your parents everything, and ask their consent and their blessing, so that the good old folks will raise no objection to the match. When you have obtained their consent, I will see what I can do to help you farther. Now, don't be in too great a hurry! Try and coax your sisters first: your mother will never cross your wishes. Of course the principal thing is to get your father's consent. I know him very well; he is stubborn, but he will listen to reason. Talk to him when he is in a good temper!" Alexei Stepanovitsch was not a little surprised at his old friend's wary advice, and promptly retorted that there could be no question of his parents' delight at the prospect of his marriage to Sofia Nikolaievna, as there could be no possible objection to her. "A great many objections," replied the wise old lady, " She has next to no fortune, and her grandfather was a simple corporal in a regiment of Ural Cossacks." But this plain speaking had not the slightest effect upon Alexei Stepanovitsch.

Madame Alakaievna, nevertheless, had spoken only too truly, but her warning came too late. A week later Alexei Stepanovitsch asked for leave-of-absence, made his adieux to Sofia Nikolaievna, who very kindly wished him a successful journey, and expressed a wish that he would find all at home well and delighted to welcome him. Encouraged by these friendly words, the young man set out, his heart beating high with hope. The old people were overjoyed to see him, but did not seem exactly surprised at his unexpected arrival, and looked at him somewhat enquiringly. His sisters, who lived in the neighbourhood, were advised of his arrival by their mother, and at once hurried to see him, and overwhelmed

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him with caresses, laughing immoderately without any reason. Alexei Stepanovitsch was especially fond of his youngest sister, and she was the first to whom he confided his secret. Tatiana Stepanovna, an enthusiastic, warm-hearted girl, listened most sympathetically to her brother's confession of his love, and then explained the enigmatic behaviour of the others. The whole family knew all about his love affair, and quite disapproved of it. This is what had happened. A short time before Alexei Stepanovitsch's arrival, Ivan Petrovitsch Karataiev had been in Ufa, and had brought home this bit of town-gossip to his wife. Alexandra Stepanovna (we know her amiable disposition) was infuriated. She had always been the principal person at home, and all, save her father, deferred to her. She bribed one of Alexei Stepanovitsch's servants to act as a spy and to keep her au courant with the minutest details of her brother's daily life and his love affair. She even went to the length of looking up a godmother of her own, who lived in Ufa, and of employing her services as another spy; and this worthy woman had sent her a long letter, composed with the assistance of a former lawyer's clerk and crammed with every scrap of petty tittle-tattle which could be raked up in the town and culled from the servants of the Subin household. Information was specially sought from the late step-mother's servants, and it is easy to imagine the colours in which Sofia Nikolaievna was painted by these gentry.

We know that in the good old times—(and perhaps even now-a-days)—sisters have never liked the idea of their brothers marrying, and have been especially annoyed if an only brother proposed bringing home a young bride, who, in the natural course of events, would become the absolute mistress of the house. Human nature is a mass of secret egoism. Almost involuntarily all of us fall under its sway, and no one amongst us is free from it. Good and worthy folks often impute other and noble motives to such selfish passions, and in this way unintentionally deceive both themselves and others. In harsh, rough natures egoism is more easily detected. This was the case with Stepan Michailovitsch's family. Choose whom the brother might, his marriage was bound to be an offence to everyone. "Our brother will turn against us, and

cease to care for us; his young wife will drive us all away. and we shall no longer be welcome in our father's house!" This would have been the cry of Alexei Stepanovna's sisters, even had the proposed sister-in-law been their equal. But anything worse than Sofia Nikolaievna was absolutely impossible. Alexandra Stepanovna sent an urgent invitation to Jelisaveta to accompany her to Bagrovo, in order that their mother and their other sisters should be duly influenced by all the numerous and necessary embellishments which they bestowed upon their brother's choice. All believed Alexandra Stepanovna implicitly; and the family's general opinion of Sofia Nikolaievna was somewhat as follows: First, this Subinia (as Alexei Stepanovitsch's mother and sisters were wont to call her at their secret conferences) was of base origin. Her grandfather was a Cossack of the Urals, called Sub, and her mother (one Vera Ivanovna Kandalinzova) came of a tradesman's family. It would be a shame and a scandal for an old and noble family to make an alliance with such a nobody. Secondly, the Subinia was poor. In the event of her father dving or losing his post, she and her brothers and sisters would have nothing, and her future husband would have the burden and responsibility of supporting these last. Thirdly, the Subinia was a vain, showy doll, accustomed to domineer over a whole town, who would be certain to despise any country-bred relations, in spite of all their old nobility and high birth. Fourthly, the Subinia was a witch, who attracted men by means of potions and spells: she had enchanted their poor brother, because she had heard he was likely to inherit a fortune; and she wished to marry into a noble family. In short, Alexandra Stepanovna employed her poisonous tongue to such good purpose, that her whole following-mother and sisters alike—were fully convinced that Sofia Nikolaievna would be a most undesirable and dangerous sister-in-law. It was quite certain that she would succeed in bewitching Stepan Michailovitsch, and then everything would be lost: so her marriage with their brother must be prevented at any cost. It was certain that the first thing to be done was to create a bad impression of Sofia in their father's mind. How was this to be managed? In spite of their ferocious dispositions, none of the sisters had the courage to tackle the old

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gentleman. They knew he would guess their real design and would not believe a word they said. They had already shewn their annoyance at the idea of Alexei getting married, when various matches had been suggested for him in the past. last they hit upon the following plan. Arina Vasilievna had a niece, Flena Ivanovna Lupenevskaia: a stupid gossiping woman, very much addicted to drink. She was persuaded to come on a visit to Bagrovo, and instructed, amongst other things, to begin chattering about Alexei Stepanovitsch and his lady-love, and, naturally, to tell all sorts of scandalous stories about Sofia Nikolaievna. Alexandra Stepanovna took Flena Ivanovna in hand, and drilled her thoroughly as to what she was to say, and how to say it. At last, when she was considered perfect in her rôle. Flena Ivanovna made her appearance in Bagrovo one fine day, at dinner time. When dinner was over, all, both hosts and guests, retired to bed for three hours. After this refreshment all reassembled for tea. The old man was in a good humour, and himself gave the visitor her chance of performing her appointed part. "Now, my fat Flena," said he, "tell us all the news from Ufa," (her sister had recently been staying in that town with her husband). . . . "Your folks have already brought home three cart loads of gossip, and you can finish off with a fourth load of lies." "Ah, dear Uncle," cried Flena, "you are always making fun of me. I have lots of news to tell, without having any need to tell lies." And she began an endless string of stories, both true and false, which I forbear to inflict upon the reader. My grandfather appeared to believe nothing she said; he amused himself by perplexing and puzzling the narrator, and causing her to lose the thread of her extraordinary stories; and behaved in such a comical way that the whole family nearly burst with laughter. thick-headed Flena, who had fortified herself with a good dram of schnapps after her nap, at last lost all patience and replied with some exasperation: "Why do you do nothing but laugh at me, Uncle, and pretend not to believe what I say? Wait a bit, and hear a piece of news I have kept for the last, which you will have to believe, and which won't make you laugh." The ladies exchanged sly smiles, and my grandfather laughed louder. "Out with it!" he said gailv, "I shall

certainly not believe it, but I promise not to laugh at it. I am already sick of your balderdash!" "Oh, Uncle, Uncle," interrupted Flena Ivanovna, "you don't know what has happened to our dear cousin Alexei Stepanovitsch. He is quite ill with love. The witch of Ufa has enchanted him—the daughter of the governor there—the voivoda, or vice-regent, or whatever he's called. I'm sure I don't know which. They say she is so beautiful that she can bewitch anyone she chooses, old or young: they all run after her like dogs after a bitch. And my good cousin is so infatuated with her that he neither eats, nor drinks, nor sleeps. He sits beside her the whole day long, staring at her, and sighing. And at night he keeps guard under her window, with his gun and sword, to preserve her from harm; and they say the Subinia is quite fond of him. He's a handsome man and of good family. She knows how to value his advantages, and she means to marry him, too And small wonder if she does. She has no money, her father is of very low birth, only the son of an Ural Cossack, Fedka Sub. Although he has an important post and is of high rank now, he has saved nothing. He has squandered everything in balls and feasts, and in dressing up his darling daughter. And the old fellow hasn't long to live, in fact he's already half dead: and he's lots of children -having had two wives-six of them! You'll have them all hanging round your neck, Uncle, when Cousin Alexei marries the girl; her smart clothes are the only dowry she can bring. They say that no one would recognise Alexei Stepanovitsch now, he looks so miserable. The servants can't help crying when they look at him; but they daren't tell you anything about him. And I assure you, Uncle, that every word I say is true. Ask the servants, and they'll tell you exactly the same." At this point Arina Vasilievna burst into tears, and the daughters all pulled very long faces. My grandfather was a little taken aback, but quickly recovered his composure, and replied with a sarcastic smile: "Well, amongst so many lies there may be a grain of truth. I have often heard tell of Mademoiselle Subina's beauty and learning; and that explains her witchcraft1 and enchantments. It is not surprising

¹ My grandfather in general was no believer in magic. A magician once tried to deceive him by telling him he could bewitch guns so that no one could fire them. My grandfather handed over his own gun to be

if Alexei has been smitten by her. But she has not the faintest intention of marrying him. She will look out for a better educated and cleverer husband. Alexei is not fit for her, and now the matter must drop. We will have no more of this chatter. Let us drink our tea in peace." After such a snub as this Flena Ivanovna did not venture to repeat any more gossip from Ufa, and in the evening took her departure. After supper, when Arina Vasilievna and her daughters were about to set off to bed in silence, Stepan Michailovitsch stopped them, and said: "Now Arischa, what are you thinking about? That fool Flena has told plenty of lies, of course. but I cannot help thinking there is some truth in the story. For some time back the tone of Alexei's letters has changed. We must look thoroughly into the matter. The best thing will be to send for Alexei, and find out the whole truth from him." Upon this, Alexandra Stepanovitsch begged permission to send an express messenger to a relative of her husband in Ufa, a very upright honourable person, so she said, who would send them full information within a week. The old man agreed not to summon his son until some enquiries had been made, and Alexandra Stepanovna set off immediately for her estate of Karataievka, which was about thirty versts away from Bagrovo. At the end of a week she returned to her parents, bringing the letter which her godmother had written some time previously, and which has already been described. The letter was shewn and read to Stepan Michailovitsch, and although he had a very low opinion of women's judgment and opinion in general, still there were various points in the letter which struck him as true, and he was influenced by it to a considerable extent. He said, in very decided tones, that he would never consent to Alexei's marrying Mademoiselle Subinia, as she was not of aristocratic birth. "Write and tell Alexei to come here at once!" were his final orders; and after the expiration of a few days (which had by no means been wasted by the mother and sisters, who spent all their time suggesting all sorts of disasters as the probable result of

experimented upon, and then calmly fired it, after the enchanter had secretly withdrawn the charge. The latter was very much upset, but recovered himself, and solemnly declared that my grandfather was also one of the "Elect," which was implicitly believed by every one, with the exception of Stepan Michailovitsch himself.

Alexei's objectionable love affair) the young man made his appearance before the letter ever reached him.

When Alexei Stepanovitsch had heard his sister's story, he was frightfully upset and perplexed. By nature weak both in will and character, reared in fear of his father and with feelings of boundless and awe-stricken respect for the whole family, he was hopelessly at a loss how to act. At last he summoned up sufficient courage to speak to his mother. Arina Vasilievna—(who adored her son, yet always regarded him as if he were still a child, and now considered that her beloved little one desired a dangerous plaything)-replied to Alexei's avowal of his passion in the tone that a mother would speak to her child who wished to play with a red-hot poker. When he burst into bitter tears, she attempted to console him in the way one would console a child who had been deprived of a toy. When he tried to contradict and confute the calumnies and lies which had been heaped upon Sofia Nikolaievna's character, his mother would not listen to him and paid no regard to what he said. Two days passed in this way. The young man's heart was fain to break. Every hour his love and longing for Sofia Nikolaievna increased; but in spite of this he could not make up his mind to speak to his father; and it was the latter who introduced the subject of Sofia.

Early one beautiful morning Alexei Stepanovitsch, pale and haggard after a sleepless night, joined his father as usual in the outside gallery of the house. The old man was in good spirits and bade his son a cheerful Good Morning, but a glance at the latter's disturbed countenance shewed him what was wringing the youth's heart. He gave him his hand to kiss. and spoke to him seriously but not unkindly: "Listen to me. Alexei, I know what is troubling you, and see perfectly well that this silly idea is firmly fixed in your head. Now tell me everything-how the matter stands-and hide nothing from me!" Although Alexei Stepanovitsch had never been on intimate terms with his father, whom he feared more than loved, on this occasion his love gave him courage to speak. He threw himself at his father's feet, and told him his simple love story without concealing anything. Stepan Michailovitsch listened to his son with great patience and attention. One of his daughters approached him to say Good Morning,

but he made such an expressive gesture with his stick, that neither she nor anyone else-not even Aksinia with the tea kettle-dare come near until he summoned them himself. Poor Alexei's story was very vague, confused, and far from But Stepan Michailovitsch's clear mind grasped the whole matter. Unfortunately the matter was not at all to his liking, and displeased him very much indeed. He had very little sympathy with impassioned love; and his masculine dignity was contemptuous of this amorousness on the part of his son, whose attitude he considered humiliating, and not worthy of a man: at the same time he realised that Sofia Nikolaievna was not in the slightest degree to blame, and that all he had been told about her was merely lies circulated by slanderers, and the invention of his own family. considering a while in silence, he remarked in a firm but kind tone, and with no appearance of anger: "Listen, Alexei! You are just of the age when a pretty girl pleases a man best. I have nothing to say against that; but you shouldn't make such a fool of yourself over anyone. I don't blame Sofia Nikolaievna one little bit : I consider her a most honourable young woman, but she is neither fit for you, nor for our home. To begin with she belongs to a parvenu family, and you to the ancient nobility. Secondly, she is city-bred, a clever accomplished girl, who, since her step-mother's death, has been accustomed to rule over a house and live in very grand style, although she has no fortune whatever. We, as you know, lead the lives of simple country gentlefolks. And you must likewise recollect that you have a very weak character, and she is a great deal too clever for you. It's a poor state of things when the wife has more sense than the husband, for she soon begins to order him about. And you are so hoplessly in love with her, that she could do as she liked with you from the start. Now listen, and obey my commands as your father: Put this love out of your mind! For my own part I believe, and don't hesitate to say, that Sofia Nikolaievna would never consent to marry you. Like desires like. We will find you a nice, quiet, country-bred girl of your own rank, with a good fortune of her own. Then you can resign your post and lead a pleasant life. We are not wealthy folks: we have enough, but nothing to spare. As for the Kurolesov

inheritance, about which so much fuss is made, there is nothing to reckon on in that quarter. The chances are that Praskovia Ivanovna may very well marry and have children, for she is not an old woman. And now let the matter drop, Alexei! Shake off your folly, as the goose shakes off water, and don't let me hear any more about Sofia Nikolaievna!" Speaking thus, Stepan Michailovitsch held out his hand condescendingly to his son, who kissed it with his wonted respect. The old gentleman then ordered tea to be served and the rest of the family to be summoned. During breakfast he was very affable and kind with everyone, but the hapless Alexei Stepanovitsch remained sunk in the deepest melancholy. No furious outbreak of rage on his father's part would have reduced him to such a state of despair. Stepan Michailovitsch's rage passed quickly, and was followed by pardon and forgiveness. But in this case he had spoken in a tone of calm resolve which deprived his son of all hope. Alexei Stepanovitsch's countenance was so troubled, that his mother, observing it, enquired if he were not feeling very well. The sisters had instantly noted his agitation, but were too sly to make any open allusion to it: and their father could gather nothing from their attitude. He scowled at his wife, and growled between his teeth: "Leave him alone!" So Alexei Stepanovitsch was left to himself, and the day passed in its usual way.

Alexei had been terribly upset by his father's decision, and his heart was almost broken. Sleep and appetite alike forsook him, he lost all interest in life, and his health suffered. His mother could hardly look at him without weeping, and even his sisters began to feel very uneasy. Each day his mother tried to find out from him what his father had really said, but in vain. To every enquiry, he had but the one reply: "My father refuses his consent; I am a ruined man; I shall never get over it." And by the end of a week he was actually in such a weak condition that he lay unconscious. No fever could be detected, and yet he was delirious day and night. No one could understand the exact nature of his malady, it was purely a nervous fever. No doctor was available in the whole district. The whole family were distracted by anxiety. They plied him with home remedies, but the patient's condition grew daily worse, and at last his debility was so

great, that his death was hourly expected. Arina Vasilievna and his sisters wept and tore their hair. Stepan Michailovitsch never shed a tear. Dry-eyed, he sat from morning to night in his son's sick room, and perhaps felt the deepest grief of all. He knew too well the cause of the young man's sickness. But youth triumphed, and at the end of six weeks Alexei Stepanovitsch recovered. He woke up one day-a little child, and very, very slowly life flowed back into its former The full recovery took two months. He seemed to have totally forgotten the past. Everything, whether out-of-doors or in the house was to him a delightful surprise; and at last his health was fully restored: he was sounder and sturdier than ever before, and the bright colour returned which had faded from his cheeks for a whole year. He fished, went quail-shooting, slept soundly, enjoyed his food, and appeared perfectly happy and free from care. His parents could hardly control their joy at his restoration to good health and were persuaded that the illness had banished all former wishes and desires from his undeveloped organisation. This no doubt would have been the case, had the young man been withdrawn from Government Service, kept another year in the country, and married to a pretty, young girl. But the old people, being quite reassured by the actual condition of their son, sent him back to Ufa at the end of another six months, to his former post—and his fate was finally decided. former passion blazed forth with new and unbounded ardour. I know not whether his love revived suddenly or gradually: all I know is, that he went very seldom to the Subins' house at first, then more frequently, and, finally, as often as he possibly I also know that his protectress, Madame Alakaieva, constantly went to visit Sofia Nikolaievna, and by dint of cunning enquiries, convinced herself and her diffident young relative that the proud and beautiful girl was not entirely indifferent to the latter.

And some months after Alexei Stepanovitsch's departure his parents received a letter from him, in which he vowed in a quite unwontedly firm, though affectionate and respectful manner, that he loved Sofia Nikolaievna better than life itself, and could not live without her. He had reason to believe that she would accept him, and he besought his parents' blessing

and permission to make her a proposal of marriage. The old folks had never expected anything of the sort, and were in a state of utter bewilderment. Stepan Michailovitsch drew his eyebrows together and spoke never a word. Everyone was silent. He waved his hand, and they all vanished. My grandfather sat alone, and traced figures with his stick on the floor of his chamber! He realised that the case was serious, and that no fever would ever cure his son of this love, again. Under the influence of his own sincere and benevolent disposition he was quite inclined to give his consent, if he could get Arina Vasilievna to agree with him on this point.

"Well, Arischa," he said next morning, when no one was present but themselves. "what do you say about all this? If we don't give our permission, we shall never see our Alexei again. Either he will die of grief, or go to the wars, or turn monk—and the family of Bagrov will become extinct." Arina Vasilievna, who had been drilled by her daughters, appeared not to share her husband's apprehensions, and replied stiffly: "Just as you like, Stepan Michailovitsch. Your will is mine. But in future don't look for any respect from your children, if they can set their will against yours in this way." The clumsy trick was successful, the old man's obstinacy was revived, and he determined not to give way. He dictated a letter to his son, in which he expressed his surprise at the old question being renewed, and reaffirmed what he had already said by word of mouth. Briefly, the letter contained a decided refusal to consider the matter any farther.

Two, three weeks passed, without any reply coming from Alexei Stepanovitsch. . . .

On a dreary day in autumn my grandfather sat on the bed in his room, wearing his beloved dressing gown, made of fine camlet, over his pleated shirt, and with his bare feet thrust in his old slippers. Beside him sat Arina Vasilievna at her spinning wheel, spinning goats' wool. Carefully and skilfully she drew out the fine even thread, destined to be woven by the house-maidens into finest cloth; which in turn was to be made into a warm, light, and comfortable winter coat for her son. Tatiana sat beside the window, reading a book. Jelisaveta Stepanovna, who had come over on a visit, was sitting on the bed beside her father telling him unwelcome family news—her

husband had been called up for military service; she had next to nothing for the housekeeping; and was in want of this and that and everything. The old man listened in sorrowful silence, his hands lying on his knees, and his already grey head sunk on his breast. Suddenly the door of the ante-room was flung open, and Ivan Malysch, a slim, good-looking youth clad in travelling dress, tripped into the chamber and gave his master a letter which he had just brought from the post town. some five-and-twenty versts distant. It was easy to see that the letter had been long and eagerly awaited, for everyone was in a state of excitement. "From Alexei?" asked the old man with eager anxiety. "Yes, from my brother," replied Tatiana, who had sprung forward to the messenger, taken the letter from him, and read the address. "Well, done, Malysch! You have earned a cup of brandy! Now go and get something to eat, and then rest yourself!" The door of the high press was unlocked, and the young lady filled a silver cup from the long-necked, gaily-coloured brandy flask, which she handed to Malysch. He crossed himself, drank, took a deep breath. bowed low, and guitted the room. "Now read it, Tania!" said my grandfather to his reader and amanuensis, who had resumed her seat by the window. My grandmother left her wheel, and my grandfather his bed: all crowded round Tatiana Stepanovna, who had broken the seal, but had not ventured to give a hasty preliminary glance through the contents. After a short pause, she began to read slowly and distinctly, but in a low tone. After the usual greeting then in vogue: "Most gracious and high-born father and most gracious lady mother." Alexei Stepanovitsch wrote almost as follows: "To my last letter of entreaty to you, my dear parents, I had the unhappiness of receiving an unfavourable reply. I cannot act in opposition to your will, and I submit myself to it. Nevertheless I cannot bear the burden of my existence without my adored Sofia Nikolaievna any longer, and in a very short time a bullet will end the life of your most miserable son."1

The effect of this letter was stunning. My aunts broke into

¹ I know this letter almost by heart, most probably it is still in existence among the papers of one or other of my brothers. It is pretty evident that a great part of its composition was borrowed from the romances of the period, which were great favourites with Alexei Stepanovitsch.

loud lamentations; my grandmother, who had never expected to hear anything of this sort, grew pale, wrung her hands and sank unconscious to the ground—(our grandmothers were able to faint, too). Stepan Michailovitsch remained motionless: he made a wry mouth, as if he were about to burst out in a rage and his head began to shake just a little it never ceased shaking until his death. After the first terrified moment, the daughters hastened to aid in the restoration of their mother to consciousness. Scarcely indeed had she recovered from her swoon than Arina Vasilievna threw herself at her husband's feet, uttering cries as though she lamented the dead. The daughters all followed her example. Arina Vasilievna, regardless of my grandfather's unpromising mien. and quite forgetting that it was entirely due to her influence that the marriage had not taken place, pleaded anxiously with him in loud and agonised tones: "Little father Stepan Michailovitsch! Do not drive your own son to desperation! He is your only boy! Let Alexei marry the girl!" The old man remained in his former attitude without moving. At last he spoke in an unsteady tone: "Stop this howling! Alexei deserves a thrashing. Now we will let the matter rest until morning! Night brings counsel. Be off and order dinner to be served!" Eating always had a soothing effect upon my grandfather when circumstances of an upsetting or perplexing nature occurred. At first, Arina Vasilievna would pay no attention to his command, and continued shrieking: "Mercy, Mercy!" But when Stepan Michailovitsch bellowed: "Get you gone!" in a tone which resembled the roar of an approaching storm, she and her daughters hurried off as fast as possible. Until dinner time no one dared set foot in my grandfather's room. It is difficult to guess what thoughts passed through his mind, and what caused the triumph of fatherly affection over that will of iron: but it is certain that the battle was fought and won by the time that Masan went to his door to tell him dinner was served. He came quietly into the dining room, and his wife and daughters, who awaited his arrival standing each beside her chair, failed to detect the slightest trace of anger on his somewhat pale face. He was more composed and cheerful than he had been earlier in the day, and ate with a good

appetite. Arina Vasilievna had been warned to refrain from making any remarks, or asking any questions; and to stop sighing and groaning. It was in vain she tried to read the thoughts of her husband—in vain did her small, brown fat-encircled eyes seek his in anxious enquiry. The clear, deep, dark-blue eyes of Stepan Michailovitsch vouchsafed no reply. After dinner he went to sleep as usual, and awoke in still better spirits. But of his son and his son's letter he spoke never a word, and the family came to the clear conclusion that he was quite easy in his mind, and had no intention of acting with severity. When Arina Vasilievna bade him Goodnight after supper, she ventured to say: "Won't you talk to me a little about Alexei?" "I have already told you that night brings counsel," replied my grandfather with a smile, "Sleep in peace!"

And next day he gave practical proof that the night had brought good and salutary counsel. He rose at four o'clock. Masan had already lighted the fire in his bed-chamber. The first words which Stepan Michailovitsch uttered were: "Tanaitschenok, you must carry a letter immediately to Alexei Stepanovitsch at Ufa. Get ready at once, and let no one know where you are going! Put the brown colt in the shafts and take the piebald as led-horse. Take two osmins of oats and a loaf of bread with you. The steward Peter will give you two roublesworth of copper for the expenses of the journey. Everything must be ready by the time I have written the letter." No sooner said than done: my grandfather's commands were always obeyed without question or delay. He then unlocked the oaken press which served him as escritoire, collected pen, ink, and a sheet of paper, and wrote -not without difficulty-for it was now many years since he had done more than sign his name—in his clumsy, antiquated handwriting: "Dear Son Alexei! I and your mother, Arina Vasilievna, give you our permission to marry Sofia Nikolaievna Subina, if so be it is the will of God, and herewith send you our parental blessing. Your father, Stepan Bagrov."

Half an hour later, and still long before daybreak, Tanaitschenok had ascended the long mountain slope which skirted the magnificent threshing-floor, and was hastening at a brisk

trot in the direction of Ufa. At five o'clock Stepan Michailovitsch gave orders to the maid-servant Aksiutka-who had developed from a young and ugly girl into an old and still uglier woman—to bring the samovar, but not to awaken anyone. All the same the old mistress was awakened, and was secretly informed in a whisper that Tanaitschenok had already been gone an hour, carrying a letter from the master, but no one knew where he was taking it. Arina Vasilievna did not dare to present herself before her husband. She remained about an hour in her room, and at last made her appearance when the old gentleman had finished his tea and was chatting and joking with Aksiutka. "Who woke you up?" asked Stepan Michailovitsch gaily, as he reached out his hand to her. "Have you slept badly?" "No one awoke me." replied Arina Vasilievna, kissing his hand with great respect, "I woke up of myself. I slept soundly all through the night: I hoped you would be kind to our poor boy, Alexei."

My grandfather looked sharply at her, but could gather nothing from her face, which wore its ordinary expression. "If that's the case," said he, "I have a pleasant surprise for you. I have just sent an express messenger to Ufa with a letter for Alexei, telling him that we consent to his marriage with Sofia Nikolaievna." In spite of the fact that Arina Vasilievna, terrified by the suicidal threat of her son, had urgently entreated her husband to give permission for the marriage to take place, the news caused her more astonishment than joy. She would indeed have been heartily glad to hear it, but she had the fear of her daughters before her eyes. Already she knew Jelisaveta's opinion of Alexei's letter, and could guess what Alexandra Stepanovna would have to say about it. As a consequence of this, Arina Vasilievna received the news with which Stepan Michailovitsch thought to overjoy her, in such a cold and constrained manner that the old man was quite hurt. Neither did Jelisaveta Stepanovna shew any sign of satisfaction; she played the part of a submissive and obedient daughter. Tatiana alone (who firmly believed that her brother's letter was meant in all seriousness) was honestly delighted. From the first moment of hearing the letter, Jelisaveta had had no fears for her brother's life.

She wept and prayed because her mother and younger sisters did so, and she did not wish to draw attention to herself by acting differently to the others. She wrote at once to Alexandra Stepanovna, who came in all haste to Bagrovo, furious at the turn of events, and convinced that their brother's letter was only one of Sofia Nikolaievna's ingenious and humbugging schemes. Assisted by Jelisaveta, she very soon persuaded her mother, and even Tatiana, into believing the same; but the matter was now concluded and it was hopeless to make objections. Stepan Michailovitsch excepted, it never occurred to any member of the family that Sofia Nikolaievna might possibly refuse her suitor.

And now we must quit Bagrovo, and see what was happening in Ufa.

It is difficult to say whether Alexei Stepanovitsch actually would have carried out his resolution to shoot himself in the event of his parents remaining inexorable: or whether influenced by reading some silly romance, he had availed himself of the idea in the hope of forcing his father to revoke his decision. When I take into consideration the various characteristics developed later by Alexei Stepanovitsch. neither one nor the other idea appears probable. My opinion is, that the young man was not lying when he threatened to shoot himself if permission to wed Sofia Nikolaievna was refused; but he had not actually made up his mind to the deed, though such a solution of a difficulty is more frequently the act of weak and fanciful than of vehement and energetic natures. In any case, the idea of suicide was borrowed from some romance, because such an act was utterly at variance with his character and the influences amid which he had been born and bred. Be this as it may, Alexei Stepanovitsch was in such an agitated state of mind after sending his letter that he was seized with an ague. He had refrained from telling his old friend Madame Alakaieva about this last desperate measure; but she soon noticed, on her daily visit, that in addition to the ague and the love trouble, the young man had something on his mind which gave him no rest, night or day. One day she sat beside him, knitting a stocking, and relating any bit of gossip that she thought might amuse him and divert his mind from his hopeless love affair.

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Stepanovitsch was lying on the sofa, his hands clasped under his head, gazing out of the window. Suddenly he turned as white as chalk: a carriage with a pair of horses turned into the courtyard from the street, and he recognised the horses and Tanaitschenok. "From my father! From Bagroyo!" he exclaimed, as he sprang up and rushed into the ante-room. Madame Alakaieva seized him by the arm, and with the aid of the hall-servant prevented him dashing out-of-doors, as the weather was cold and damp. While this was happening, Tanaitschenok hurried into the house and gave him the letter. With trembling hands Alexei Stepanovitsch broke the seal, read the few lines: his eyes filled with tears, and he sank on his knees before the sacred ikon.1 At first Madame Alakaieva was quite at a loss what to think of his strange behaviour. but Alexei Stepanovitsch handed her the letter, and having read it, she threw herself-wild with joy-on the neck of the young man, who was nearly swooning with delight. Now, for the first time, he confessed to her the contents of his last letter to his parents. Madame Alakaieva shook her head at him. Tanaitschenok was called and minutely questioned as to how and why and when he had been sent on his errand, and the two friends were quite convinced that Stepan Michailovitsch had acted solely on his own initiative in the matter, without the concurrence and, most probably, against the wishes of his family. After the first transports of Alexei Stepanovitsch's rapture and the first bewilderment of Madame Alakajeva were somewhat calmed, and when, not daring to trust the evidence of their eyes, they had re-read the letter—(for they knew the stubborn character of Stepan Michailovitsch, and distrusted the evil influence of his family)—a long confabulation was held about the next step to be taken in the great affair. So long as the consent of Stepan Michailovitsch was still in the balance, it had seemed as if no difficulties were to be overcome in the case of Sofia Nikolaievna: but now a sudden doubt arose in Madame Alakaieva's mind, even while taking into consideration all the favourable symptoms, as to whether she had not represented the matter in too promising a light to her young favourite. With her wonted prudence she at

¹ In Russia a holy picture or ikon is suspended on the walls of every room in a house. [Tr. S. R.]

once set to work to check his high hopes, and warned him that if he let himself be too dazzled by his success with his parents, it might be still harder for him to bear a sudden and possible shattering of his beautiful dream. She hinted at the lack of foundation for such premature rejoicing so very plainly that Alexei Stepanovitsch began to feel quite anxious. But Madame Alakaieva by no means faltered in her efforts on his behalf, and went next day to see Sofia Nikolaievna in order to propose the marriage to her. Quite briefly and simply, and without exaggerating a single point, she spoke of Alexei's devoted and passionate love, which probably was no secret to Sofia Nikolaievna herself any more than to anyone in the whole city. With all the partiality of a relation she dwelt on the amiable character, the good nature, and the remarkable modesty of the young man. She gave a minute and complete account of the present and future condition of his personal fortune, spoke quite candidly of his family, not omitting to mention in this connection that the previous day Alexei Stepanovitsch had received a letter from his parents, giving their permission and blessing to his request for the hand of the universally admired and beloved Sofia Nikolaievna. The lover himself, added the old lady, what with impatience and suspense while awaiting his parents consent, and what with his unutterable love, had fallen into a fever, but had not been able to withstand the desire to hear his fate decided: and so she, as his relative, had come to ask Sofia Nikolaievna whether she would grant permission for Alexei Stepanovitsch to make a formal proposal for her hand to Nikolai Feodoro-Sofia Nikolaievna, who had already long been accustomed to think and act for herself, replied without the slightest embarrassment, and still less of the affectation and airs which the young ladies of that period assumed in like circumstances: "I am grateful to Alexei Stepanovitsch for the honour he has done me, and grateful to you, respected Maria Paylovna, for your friendly interest. For some time past I have been aware of Alexei Stepanovitsch's inclination for myself, and have thought it quite probable that he wished to make me a proposal of marriage; without deciding for my own part whether I could give him a definite reply. Alexei Stepanovitsch's last visit to his home, his sudden and—as

you yourself explained to me-dangerous and long illness while away, and the change in his manner when he returned to Ufa, all made it quite clear to me, that his parents had no desire for me to become their daughter-in-law. I confess that I was astonished at this attitude. I should have thought a refusal on the part of my own father much more likely. As time went on, I noticed that Alexei Stepanovitsch's old affection for me was reviving, and now I hear that he has obtained the consent of his parents. You see for yourself, respected Maria Payloyna, that events have taken a critical turn. To marry into a hostile family is too risky an undertaking for my taste. My father would never refuse his consent to my marrying the man of my choice, but in this case I should be compelled to practise deceit. For if he guessed that any country nobleman whatever had been forced to beg and entreat his parents' permission to marry me, he would never permit me to degrade myself by entering a family where I was not welcome. And I am not in love with Alexei Stepano-I have the utmost esteem for his fine character and his constancy, and I believe he is capable of making the woman of his choice happy. And so you must permit me to consider the matter farther. And above all I must see Alexei Stepanovitsch himself, before saving anything to my invalid father, who must not be unnecessarily agitated. Will you ask your nephew to come and see us, as soon as he is sufficiently recovered?"

Madame Alakaieva reported this answer in full to young Bagrov, who considered it distinctly unfavourable to his hopes; but his old friend consoled him by saying that she herself, on the contrary, considered it very friendly.

For a long time after she had bidden Maria Pavlovna a friendly adieu, Sofia Nikolaievna sat alone in her salon, sunk in deep thought. Her bright, sparkling eyes were troubled; sorrowful thoughts filled her mind and were reflected in her charming and expressive countenance. Every word she had spoken to Madame Alakaeva was strictly true; and the question as to whether or not she should wed Alexei Stepanovitsch remained unanswered. At last the long-expected proposal of marriage had been made, and the answer—so pregnant with fate for a girl—must be decided upon. Her

extraordinarily clear and lucid mind, as yet untouched by passion, foresaw all events in their true light. The future promised nothing but sorrow and trouble. Her father lay upon his death-bed, for the family physician had already warned her that he would not live much over a year. The old man's property consisted merely of two insignificant estates. Subovka and Kasimovka, comprising only a retinue of forty serfs: in ready money Nikolai Feodorovitsch had only saved about ten thousand roubles destined for his Sonitschka's dowry. To see his darling child married had been his dearest and most fervent wish; but (and occasionally such curious cases occur)... so far the universally adored Sofia Nikolaievna had never had a suitor, by which I mean that no one had ever made a formal request for her hand. In the event of her father's death, the six children of his two marriages would have to be supported somehow: two trustees would have to be appointed; in fact the three children of Alexandra Petrovna, who had inherited some fifty serfs, were to be sent to their grandmother, whose son had already promised to act as trustee. Sofia Nikolaievna's brothers by the same mother were already temporarily provided for in the Moscow University School for the nobility: and it seemed as if she were likely to be left alone in the world. without even the support of some distant relative. She would be without a roof to cover her. Poverty, want, dependence upon strangers, are a dreary lot for anyone. But for a girl who had occupied such a high social position and had lived in such luxury, proud by disposition and accustomed to unbounded admiration and flattery, a girl too who had already experienced the painful burden of dependence and had only just tasted the sweets of ease and power, the outlook was indeed intolerable. And here was a young, honourable, modest, charming, and well-born man offering her his hand and his heart—an only son, whose father possessed an estate of nearly two hundred serfs, who had the expectation of a splendid property from his aunt, who loved and worshipped her: surely there was no cause for hesitation here. On the other hand the disparity in their mentality was too great. No one in the town would ever have dreamt of such a thing as Sofia Nikolaievna marrying Alexei Stepanovitsch.

clearly recognised the correctness of public opinion and could not but agree with it. Herself a marvel of beauty and intelligence, he pink and white as any lass (a circumstance quite annoying to her in itself) but a simple, and generally accepted rather stupid country squire: she versatile and witty-he shy and lumpish: she a cultured and, considered in the light of those days, quite a learned maiden, well-read, and interested in all the questions of the day—he an utterly uneducated man, who had read nothing in his life but a couple of inferior novels and a number of Russian songs, who found no interest in anything but catching quails with a decoy and flying falcons. She, sparkling, entertaining, and enchanting in society—he unable to utter even a few words, shy, awkward, ridiculous, covered with confusion and hiding in corners so as not to come in contact with the carpet knights of the locality (although in reality he had a great deal more sense than many of these); she the possessor of a proud, lofty unbending will—he weak, without a will of his own, and influenced by any and everyone. Was he indeed a man capable of protecting his wife at home and abroad? Such comparisons and doubts crowded the thoughts of the young girl. Twilight had long since fallen, and still she sat alone in the salon. At length she was overwhelmed by such an intense melancholy, such an utter feeling of helplessness and absence of all guidance, everything in life seemed so gloomy and unpromising, that she felt an urgent necessity to fortify herself by prayer. She sought her own chamber, and, before the picture of Our Lady of Smolensk, which once before had miraculously endowed her with courage to bear the burden of her life, sank on her knees and prayed long, weeping bitterly.

Even while she prayed she felt new strength in her soul, combined with a will and capacity for making her choice; although as yet she did not know what the choice would be. Revived by this feeling, she rose and went down stairs to give a look to her sick father as he lay asleep; then returned to her chamber, lay down on her bed, and slept peacefully. She awoke next morning calm and collected; and after short reflection she decided to carry out her intention of holding an interview with her lover, and letting the impression made on her by him at this interview decide her choice.

Alexei Stepanovitsch, who awaited her decision in a state of the most feverish suspense, sent for his doctor, and begged him to cure him as fast as he could. This the good man promised to do, and for once in his life kept his word. the end of a week's time, Alexei Stepanovitsch -wasted, pale, and weak-was seated in Sofia Nikolaievna's drawing room. The lamentable appearance of the youth, who until recently had been so full of health and strength, excited her deep compassion, and she softened down a good deal of what she had to say to him. The substance of what she told him was precisely the same as that she had told old Madame Alakaieva; but she now added for the first time that she would never leave her father while he lived, and that she had no wish to live in the country, but preferred to live in a Government town, and especially in Ufa, where she had so many friends. people of culture and position, whose society she desired for herself and her husband. In conclusion, she expressed a wish that her husband should remain in Government service and make an esteemed and honourable-if not a brilliantposition for himself. In addition to agreeing to all the usual rights and claims of a betrothed wife. Alexei Stepanovitsch humbly added that any wish of Sofia Nikolaievna would be a command, and that his sole happiness would lie in the fulfilment of her desires. And, marvellous to relate, this speech—so utterly unworthy of any man—a certain sign that a husband's love could not be relied upon and that his wife would have but a poor prospect of future happiness met with the entire approval of a girl of the type of Sofia Nikolaievna! However unwillingly, we are fain to confess that the love of power, which had its root deep in her being, had so waxed and increased since her stepmother's death that Sofia Nikolaievna, without even being aware of it, was strongly influenced thereby in her selection of Alexei Stepanovitsch as a husband. She desired to read the letter for herself, in which his parents consented to his making his offer of marriage. The young man had the letter in his pocket and instantly handed it to her. Sofia Nikolaievna read it through, and was convinced that her suspicion of an earlier refusal on the part of the family was only too well-founded. The young man was incapable of telling a lie, and was so deeply in love

that a kind look from his adored charmer was enough to extract anything from him that she wished to hear; and as Sofia Nikolaievna ordered him to be quite candid with her, he told her everything, in no way concealing anything unfavourable; and, as it turned out, this candour served him in good stead in his wooing. The thought that she might transform and remodel this amiable, modest, and innocent youth according to her own mind sprang suddenly into the alert but feminine brain of Sofia Nikolaievna. In the most enchanting colours her imagination portraved the gradual awakening and development of the vet dormant mind of this child of nature, who was lacking neither in intellect nor feeling—these qualities being as yet unawakened—whose spiritual being would melt with gratitude and love to her as its awakener. This thought took possession of the young girl's enthusiastic fancy, and she dismissed her sick lover very sweetly, promising to speak to her father and send a reply by Madame Alakaieva. Alexei Stepanovitsch was lost in bliss, according to the fashion of those days. In the evening Sofia Nikolaievna again sought counsel in prayer. She prayed long, earnestly, and with fervour. Tired out, she slept, and during the night had a dream, which she, as anyone may readily believe, considered to be a sanction of her choice. I cannot recollect the exact tenour of this remarkable dream, but I do most clearly recall that it might much more justly have been explained in quite an opposite sense. The next morning Sofia Nikolaievna informed her practically dving father of Alexei Stepanovitsch's proposal of marriage. Although the old man had no actual acquaintance with his daughter's suitor, still he had a decided notion that the latter was an utterly insignificant person. In spite of his earnest desire to see his Sonitschka settled before he died, this wooer . . . the first his daughter had ever had, be it observed . . . was utterly distasteful to him. However Sofia Nikolaievna hastened to explain to him with her usual dexterity and persuasiveness that this match was by no means to be despised. She repeated everything in favour of the marriage that we have already heard, and especially assured her father that she would never leave him, but would live with him after she was married. She dwelt so earnestly upon her desolate condition, when God should choose to make

her an orphan, that her father exclaimed with tears in his eyes: "My dearest and best of little daughters! Just act as you think best! I agree to all. Bring your future husband to see me at once! I wish to know more about him. I give my full and unqualified consent to his bringing me his parents' written proposal of marriage."

Sofia Nikolaievna thereupon promptly wrote to Madame Alakaieva to request her to give the young man her father's invitation, fixing the day and hour.

Alexei Stepanovitsch, who meanwhile was sunk in visions of bliss and was revelling in the sweetest hopes, was utterly disconcerted at receiving an invitation to wait on Nikolai Feodorovitsch at a certain hour, as he had imagined his future father-in-law far too weak and ill to be able to take part in an interview. Nikolai Feodorovitsch who, in the absence of the Vice-Roy was the first person and held the highest authority in the whole Province of Ufa! Nikolai Feodorovitsch! whom, hitherto, he had never approached without experiencing the most respectful awe, now filled him with terrified dismay. "What will he say to my presumptuous proposal? I. an obscure official of the fourteenth class, to dare to think of marrying his daughter! 'Why have you presumed to think of my daughter!' he may say to me." ' Is she the bride for the likes of you? To the guardhouse with him! Let him appear before the tribunal'!" However silly and idiotic such thoughts may seem, it is a fact that they passed through the youth's distracted mind, as he frequently related himself in later days. At last he grew more composed, and encouraged by Madame Alakaieva's exhortations, he put on his uniform. [which hung on his shrunken form as if suspended from a clothes peg], and took himself off to the Viceregent. With his three-cornered hat tucked under his arm, his shaking hand trying to keep his refractory sword in the right position, scarce able to breathe for nervousness, he was ushered into the chamber of the once brilliant and witty Nikolai Feodorovitsch-now a broken, and dying old man. Alexei Stepanovitsch made a low bow and remained standing near the door. This sort of entry made a bad impression on the invalid. " Please come here, Monsieur Bagrov," he said, "and sit down at my bedside! I am very weak, and cannot

speak loudly." Alexei Stepanovitsch advanced, and after making several more bows seated himself in an armchair beside the bed. "You are asking my daughter's hand in marriage," continued the old man. Up sprang Bagrov, made another bow, and replied that this was so and that he had dared to hope for such happiness. I could indeed repeat the whole conversation, word for word, as Alexei Stepanovitsch was fond of telling the story in later days; but it recapitulated all that the reader already knows, and I fear to weary him. The substance of it all was, that Nikolai Feodorovitsch questioned the young man as to his family and fortune, and as to his future intention with regard to the Government service, and where he intended to live. He told him that Sofia Nikolaievna, beyond a dowry of ten thousand roubles, would only inherit two families of serfs and three thousand roubles in ready money under his first marriage settlement. Finally he observed that Alexei Stepanovitsch, as an obedient son, had certainly not omitted to obtain his parents' consent before making his proposal: it was customary however for the bridegroom's parents to write personally to the father of the bride, and until this had been done no definite reply could be made. Alexei Stepanovitsch kept everlastingly jumping up, bowing, and sitting down again: he agreed to everything, and duly promised to write to his father and mother on the following day. At the end of half-an-hour the old gentleman said he was tired, which was true indeed, and dismissed the young man in a very curt way. Scarcely had the latter taken his departure than Sofia Nikolaievna tripped into her father's room. She found him lying with closed eyes, his face expressing exhaustion and weariness of spirit. Hearing his daughter's step, he opened his eyes, looked at her enquiringly. pressed his hands to his breast, and said: "Sonitschka, is it possible that you wish to marry a man like that?" Sofia Nikolaievna had quite anticipated the effect of the interview and was prepared for the worst. "I have already told you, dear father," she replied in a gentle but resolute tone, "that at first sight you would take Alexei Stepanovitsch to be a stupid sort of man. He has no conversation, and is shy and constrained in company. But I have had much opportunity of seeing him alone and talking to him, and I assure you that he

is not in the least stupid; in fact he is much cleverer than many of those who make fun of him. I do beg of you to let him come and see you now and then, for I am persuaded you will end up by agreeing with me." The old man looked long and earnestly in his daughter's face, as if to discover the secret workings of her mind, sighed deeply, and consented to invite the young man to pay him another visit shortly, in order to get better acquainted with him.

Alexei Stepanovitsch wrote an affectionate and dutiful letter to his parents, which he despatched by the earliest post. He thanked them for enabling him to continue living. and entreated them earnestly to write immediately to Nikolai Feodorovitsch soliciting the hand of his daughter for their son: he added that this formality was customary, and that Subin declined to give his consent to the marriage until he had received the letter. The carrying-out of this simple request placed the old couple in a pretty dilemma: they were no hands at letter-writing: they had not the faintest notion of what they were expected to say, and at the same time were exceedingly perturbed at the thought of laying themselves open to the criticism of their future connection, who was such a distinguished and learned man. It took them a whole week to compose and write the letter, but at last, and with infinite toil and labour, it was finished and sent to Alexei Stepanovitsch. It was very awkwardly expressed, and lacked utterly the usual compliments and expressions of friendly regard.

While Alexei Stepanovitsch was awaiting the reply to his own letter, he received two invitations to visit Nikolai Feodorovitsch. The second visit somewhat lessened the bad impression made by the first. Sofia Nikolaievna was present at the third, tripping casually into her father's room as if quite unaware of her suitor's presence there, and professing that she had returned quite unexpectedly from paying visits. Her advent changed everything: she contrived to bring out Alexei Stepanovitsch at his best, knowing exactly how to turn the conversation so that the natural good sense, honesty, moral worth, and true-heartedness of the young man were shewn to the best advantage. Nikolai Feodorovitsch was unaffectedly delighted, treated Alexei with marked courtesy

and kindness, and invited him to come and see him as often as possible. When Alexei had gone, the old man embraced his Sonitschka with tears, and fondly caressing her, told her she was a fairy who could bring the hidden treasures of a man's soul to light, although so deeply sunken that no one had even suspected their existence. Sofia Nikolaievna herself was very much pleased, for she had scarcely dared to hope that her future husband would shew himself in such an advantageous light.

At last the long-expected letter, with the formal proposal of marriage on the part of Alexei Stepanovitsch's parents, arrived, and the young man handed it himself to Nikolai Feodorovitsch. But alas, even the magic presence and aid of Sofia Nikolaievna were powerless to aid in this case: the bridegroom again grew displeasing to his future father-inlaw, who was highly incensed by the letter itself. The next day he had a long talk with his daughter, and placed plainly before her the disadvantages of such a union—where the man was so greatly his wife's inferior in intellect, culture, and character. He added that her lover's family did not like her, and probably would hate her, which was invariably the attitude of rough, towards educated people; he warned her against placing any blind trust in the promises of her plighted bridegroom, saying that such promises were seldom fulfilled after marriage; and that even with all the good will in the world, a man of Alexei Stepanovitsch's type was incapable of carrying them out. But Sofia Nikolaievna was quite able to reply to all these well-founded objections with her usual tact and dexterity; and knew how to set forth the advantages of a marriage with such an amiable, honourable, and worthy man—(even if he were rather bashful and uneducated)—in such a convincing way, that at last Nikolai Feodorovitsch was quite carried away by her sanguine hopes and gave his final consent to the marriage. Sofia Nikolaievna embraced her father affectionately, kissed his emaciated hands, and fetching the holy picture, knelt down at his bedside, and received his blessing with many tears. "Father," cried the happy girl, enthusiastically, "with the help of God I hope to make a new man of Alexei Stepanovitsch before a year is over. Reading good books, intercourse with cultured people, constant com-

panionship with me, will supply all that is lacking in him owing to his neglected education: his shyness will disappear, and he will be able to make a good figure in society." "God grant it may be so!" replied the old man. "Send for the priest, and you and I will pray together for your future happiness."

The evening of that same day, the bridegroom, Madame Alakaievna, and several intimate friends of the Subin family were invited to the house of Nikolai Feodorovitsch, who gave the bridegroom his formal consent. No words can paint the happiness of the young man! In her extremest old age Sofia Nikolaievna never forgot her husband's rapture during that moment. Alexei Stepanovitsch threw himself at Nikolai Feodorovitsch's feet, kissed his hands, wept, sobbed like a child, and nearly fainted—so overwhelmed was he by the happiness, which up to the very last moment had seemed so utterly unattainable. The bride herself was deeply affected by this fervent outpouring of such ardent and boundless love.

Two days later it was decided to announce the formal betrothal, and the whole city was invited. The event caused no little surprise, for no one in the town had ever really believed the report that Sofia Nikolaievna Subina was going to marry Alexei Stepanovitsch. Now they had to believe it, and assembled in full force at the appointed time to offer their congratulations. The bridegroom beamed with joy, and was utterly unconscious of the irony conveyed in the compliments of the well-wishers, and of their sarcastic smiles and glances; but Sofia Nikolaievna saw, marked, heard, and understood everything, although people were very careful not to betray themselves in her presence. From the outset she had been perfectly aware how her choice would be criticised by the company present; but still she could not fail to be stung by these signs of disapprobation, though no one could ever have suspected it. She was very gay; charming with everyone, especially with her betrothed husband; and seemed perfectly happy in her choice. The bridal pair were duly summoned to Nikolai Feodorovitsch's room, where the rings were exchanged in the presence of a few witnesses. The old father could not restrain his tears while the priest recited the prayers.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, he was kissed by the young couple, pressed each to his heart, and, looking earnestly in Alexei Stepanovitsch's face, said: "Never cease loving her as you love her now! God has given you such a treasure. . . ." he could say no more. The newly-plighted couple returned to the expectant company, escorted by the witnesses to the betrothal. All the men embraced the bridegroom, and kissed the bride's hand: while all the ladies embraced the bride, and gave their hand to the bridegroom to kiss. When all this bustle and fuss was over, the betrothed couple were seated side by side on a sofa, kissed each other, and received all the congratulations over again, which the guests, each holding a glass of wine, hastened to offer them. S. I. Anitschkov presented the men, and Madame Alakaieva the ladies. Alexei Stepanovitsch, who had never drunk anything stronger than water in his whole life, was persuaded to accept a glass of wine in honour of the great occasion, which instantly took effect upon his brain, already overwrought by sickness and emotion. He grew exceedingly lively; laughed, cried. and became quite confidential, to the extreme delight of the visitors and equal distress of his bride. The company waxed livelier, as they drank one cheery glass after another; and a splendid breakfast was served. This was greatly enjoyed; more wine was drunk; and everyone separated in the highest spirits. The poor bridegroom had a bad headache, and Madame Alakaieva saw him safely home.

Nikolai Feodorovitsch grew worse, and wished to hurry on the wedding; but as on the other hand he desired the dower to include the customary magnificent jewels, the event had to be postponed for a couple of months. The maternal diamonds and pearls were sent to Moscow to be re-set according to the latest fashion: silver plate, millinery, and various presents were likewise ordered to be sent from that city, but the bulk of the trousseau, the hangings of the state bed, and the beautiful pelisse of black fox fur—(these pelts even then cost five hundred roubles apiece, and cannot be bought now for less than five thousand roubles)—were all made in Kazan. Table linen and finest Holland linen were provided in the greatest abundance. The ten thousand roubles which had been set aside for the dower were considered a large sum in

those days. Much had been accumulated beforehand, having been purchased as favourable conditions arose; and when one reads the inventory of the dower, one cannot fail to be astonished alike at the luxury and the cheap cost of living at the end of the eighteenth century.

The first business after the betrothal ceremony was to write all the necessary complimentary letters to the relatives of both bride and bridegroom. Sofia Nikolaievna, who possessed a marvellous gift for letter-writing, sent such a charming and affectionate epistle to her future parents-in-law, that Stepan Michailovitsch, although unable to express himself well in a letter, was able to fully appreciate it. After listening with great delight while Tania read it aloud, he took it from his daughter, remarked on the beauty and distinctness of the writing, read the letter through twice, and said: "A clever girl, and a good-hearted one, too!" The whole family were silent with vexation, with the exception of Alexandra Stepanovna, who, unable to control her spite, replied with a sour face: "All that sort of stuff is her book-learning, Father: honey in the mouth and gall in the heart." The old man turned on her in a rage, and said in a threatening tone: "What authority have you for saying that? Take care that I hear no more of these hints, and that you stop influencing the others with your black tongue!" This rebuke made them all quiet as mice, and they hated Sofia Nikolaievna all the more, while Stepan Michailovitsch, on whom the delightful letter had made a deep impression, himself seized a pen, and in defiance of all polite formalties, wrote as follows:

"My dear, my sensible, clever daughter-in-law! As you shew such affection and respect for us old folks, without even having seen us, we feel the greatest affection for you. And when we meet, with God's will we shall all love each other still more dearly. We shall treat you as our own daughter, and rejoice in the happiness of our Alexei!"

Sofia Nikolaievna was quite able to value this old man's simple letter at its true worth. In actual truth, she already loved him from what she had heard of him. The bride had no relatives to whom it was necessary that Alexei Stepanovitsch should write. She desired however that her betrothed should send a letter to her friend, the guardian of her two brothers,

A. F. Anitschkov; and naturally the betrothed was only too ready to fulfil her wish. As she suspected that Alexei Stepanovitsch did not possess any especial talent for letterwriting, she hinted that she would like to see the composition before it was sent off. Heavens! What she was forced to read! Alexei Stepanovitsch had heard so much talk of the great erudition of Anitschkov that he thought it behoved him to write a really creditable letter to such a great man; and, consequently, had borrowed such wonderful phrases from this or that novel, that under any other circumstances Sofia Nikolaievna would have laughed heartily at his effort. As it was she turned scarlet with shame, and wept. At first she was at a loss how to extricate herself from an awkward position; but, after a little thought, she decided to write a letter to Anitschkov herself, which she set her bridegroom to copy, after she had explained to the latter that, owing to his never having been accustomed to correspond with unknown people. he had written a letter which might have offended Anitschkov. As she spoke thus, she felt deeply ashamed for her future husband, her voice trembled, and she felt humiliated at having to give him instructions. However, the bridegroom himself was quite charmed with the suggestion. He read the letter. found it splendid, was lost in admiration of the authoress's skill, and covered her hands with kisses. But this first step towards the control of and power over her future husband. which she had so much desired, was a hard one.

As he knew that his parents had but little money and were compelled to exercise economy, Alexei Stepanovitsch wrote to them asking for a very small sum; but he persuaded Madame Alakaieva to follow up his request with another letter, dwelling on the modesty of his demand and the urgent necessity of a reasonable amount of money to meet the expenses of the wedding. He himself only asked for eight hundred roubles. Madame Alakaieva however demanded fifteen hundred. The old people replied that they had not so much money, and sent him their last three hundred roubles, adding that if he really was in want of more, he must borrow the other five hundred roubles of somebody or other. At the same time they explained that it was their intention to send him four horses, a coachman, a postillion, a coach, and a good

stock of provisions. They made no reply to Madame Alakaiva's letter, as they were very much annoyed at her unreasonable demand. There was nothing more to be done with them. Alexei Stepanovitsch thanked them for their kindness, and borrowed five hundred roubles. As this was not near enough, Madame Alakaieva lent him another five hundred, without the knowledge of his parents.

Now the bridegroom's visits waxed more frequent and vet longer, and his conversations with his bride took an easier and less constrained turn. Now for the first time did Sofia Nikolaievna realise the boredom that awaited her as she grew to understand her husband thoroughly! It is true that she had not erred in crediting him with natural good sense, a good heart, and inviolable honesty; but in all other matters he betraved such a narrow intellectual outlook such petty interests, and such a mixture of self-will and selfconceit, that, not infrequently, her strong will and high courage were subdued; not infrequently she hesitated as to carrying out her intention of marrying him, would wrench the betrothal ring from her finger and laying it before the picture of the Mother of God, would entreat counsel and help from Heaven with bitter tears. As we already know, this was her invariable custom when any difficulty arose in her life. After prayer on these occasions, Sofia Nikolaievna would rise from her knees, strengthened and comforted; and, recognising this consolation as coming from God, would slip the ring on her finger, and go cheerfully off to the salon and her expectant lover! Meanwhile her sick father grew worse and yet weaker every day. His daughter comforted him by telling him that she was continually discovering new and lovable qualities in her bridegroom, and that she was firmly convinced she would be happy with him. Long-continued sickness had clouded the acute mind of Nikolai Feodorovitsch. Not only did he implicitly believe in the sincerity of his child, but himself ended by firmly believing in her future happiness. "Thank God," he often exclaimed, "now I can die in peace." The wedding-day drew near. The trousseau and gifts were all prepared. The bridegroom—or rather Madame Alakaieva in whose hands he had placed everything-had provided everything necessary on his side. That worthy dame until

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now had had no conception of Alexei Stepanovitsch's utter lack of knowledge of the most ordinary rules of society. Without her guidance, he would have committed blunders which would have driven his bride to desperation. For example, he proposed sending her a dress as a birthday gift that at best would only have been suitable for a servant-girl. quite seriously contemplated setting off to his wedding in an ancient, ancestral vehicle, which would have sent the whole town into fits of laughter; and so on. It is true these matters were not of intrinsic importance; but it would have been perfectly intolerable to Sofia Nikolaievna to have her husband the laughing stock of the Ufa gentry. Of course Alexei Stepanovitsch was deterred from carrying out his absurd intentions through the good offices of Madame Alakaieva, or say rather by the bride herself, for she was consulted in everything by the old lady. Sofia Nikolaievna hastened to inform the young man that he must send her nothing on her birthday, as she objected to receiving birthday presents. For the wedding she had a new English coach bought, which Mursachanov, an Ufa land owner, had recently brought from Petersburg, where, in the course of one month, he had squandered and gambled away his whole fortune. For this coach three hundred and fifty roubles were paid in assignats. This money was drawn by Sofia Nikolaievna from her own cash, and the coach was sent to the bridegroom as a gift from her father, but with a warning not to disturb the invalid by expressing any thanks. Other difficulties were settled in like manner. Alexei Stepanovitsch and the bride wrote a joint letter to the old Bagroys. in which they pressed them—both in their own name and that of Nikolai Feodorovitsch—to attend the wedding. the old pair, accustomed to the easy and unconstrained life of country folk, declined the invitation. Town life and town company alike inspired them with terror. The daughters had no wish to go, either, but Stepan Michailovitsch overruled them and decided that Alexandra and Jelisaveta must be present at the wedding. Erlykin was absent on State Service in Orenburg, but Ivan Karataiev accompanied his wife to Ufa. The arrival of these unexpected and uninvited guests caused no end of unpleasantness to Sofia Nikolaievna. Her future sisters-in-law, sly and crafty women by nature and

evilly-disposed towards her, each behaved in a cold, repellent and, frequently, downright uncivil manner. Sofia Nikolaievna was only too well aware how little friendship she had to expect from her husband's sisters; nevertheless she considered it her duty to receive them with all kindness and affection. But she was forced to the conclusion that all her efforts to please were wasted, and that her amiable behaviour only served to make her enemies more contemptuous. In self-defence she was compelled to adopt a tone of cold politeness, which was no protection from those venomous shafts and insolent allusions, which cannot fail to be understood, and which it is impossible to resent without laying oneself open to farther slights. This cowardly habit of insulting anyone by hints and allusions, which to-day—thanks to our improved education is relegated to its original circle of petty tradesfolk, servant girls, and lackeys, was only too common in those days amongst the country nobility, owing to their intimate association with their servants. And am I right in saving it has disappeared? Rather, does it not exist in a still greater measure in our circles, although concealed by a mask of wit and refinement?

It was but in the nature of things that the bridegroom's sisters—the shabby scarecrows, as they were called—detested the townsfolk of Ufa. Whatever Ivan Petrovitsch Karataiev. (who, faithful to his Bashkirian habits, did nothing but drink bitter schnapps for his health's sake from morning to night). thought about it all, one thing is certain: that on taking leave of Sofia Nikolaievna after seeing her for the first time, he kissed her hand thrice, and exclaimed with all the enthusiasm of a true-born Bashkir: "The deuce! fine lass our Alexei has caught!" Poor Sofia Nikolaievna shed many a tear over the hostile attitude of her future sisters-in-law and over the rough good nature of her Bashkirian brother-in-law. The worst of it all was that Alexei Stepanovitsch appeared to notice nothing wrong, and seemed quite satisfied with his sisters' behaviour towards Sofia Nikolaievna, a circumstance which augured plenty of sorrow and trouble for the future. The two malicious serpents utilised every moment of their visit to instil their poison into the candid mind of their brother, in whose house they were staying; and they acted with such prudence and cunning.

that Alexei Stepanovitsch never suspected their tricks. A thousand sly allusions to the bride's proud disposition, to her poverty, which she concealed under silk and gold, to his own after subordination to her will, were continually dinned into his ears. Many of these he neither understood nor heeded: but many reached their mark, led him astray, and caused him great uneasiness of mind. And all these wily machinations, and frequently even open attacks, were disguised by the mask of love and sympathy: "You are growing very thin, little brother," Jelisaveta Stepanovna would say to him, "that's the result of eternally running about. Sofia Nikolaievna's errands leave you no peace. You have only just come, tired and hungry, from Golubinaia Street, and off you rush to your bride without even sparing the time to eat something. You don't know how miserable you make us. . ." and then hypocritical tears, or, at the least, blinking and much play of an old pocket handkerchief, would end up her sinister hints. "No," would scream Alexandra Stepanovna, breaking vehemently into the conversation, "I cannot contain myself any longer. I know very well that you will be cross with us, little brother: perhaps you'll even cease to love us. God's will be done! But I will speak the truth once and for all; you have quite changed towards us; you are ashamed of your sisters; you neglect us; you think only of your Sofia Nikolaievna: your one thought is how not to vex her. You are nothing but her slave, her serf! And what about that old witch of an Alakaieva, who orders you about just as she pleases: 'Go there! Buy this! Enquire for So-and-So!' And then she will tell you to look sharp, and takes upon herself to reprove you! As for us, she reckons us as nought, it never occurs to her to ask our advice about anything!" Alexei Stepanovitsch had not a word to utter in reply to this long tirade. He only told his sisters that he loved them, and should always love them; but he must now go and see Sofia Nikolaievna. And with that he took his hat, and made off with all haste. "Now run." shrieked the spiteful Alexandra Stepanovitsch after him, "run as fast as you can, so as not to keep her waiting; or she will be cross with you and won't let you kiss her hand!" Scenes like

this were continually taking place, and could not fail to have some effect on Alexei. It did not take Sofia Nikolaievna long to detect a change in her betrothed's manner towards her after the arrival of his sisters. He seemed embarrassed, kept his appointments with her less punctually, and visited her less frequently. Sofia Nikolaievna knew the meaning of this change very well. And old Madame Alakaieva, who was now on very friendly and intimate terms with her, knew all that went on in Alexei Stepanovitsch's house, and was continually bringing her news. Sofia Nikolaievna's disposition was hasty and passionate; and she would not hesitate to sound a matter to its depths when needful. She decided very wisely that it. was not advisable to let the sisters have time to implant their poison still more deeply in the bridegroom's mind, and that the latter's eyes must be opened and his love and constancy for herself put to the proof. If the proof should turn out unsatisfactorily, it would be better to part before marriage than to unite herself to a man with no will of his own, who, as she herself expressed it, "would prove neither a shade from the sun, nor a shelter from the rain." Thereupon she asked her bridegroom to come and see her early one morning; shut herself up with him in the salon; gave orders that no one was to be admitted; and addressed the young man, who had turned white with fear, somewhat after this fashion: "Just listen carefully to me! I intend to speak to you from my heart and quite candidly; and I entreat you to be equally candid with me. Your sisters hate me and have done everything in their power to turn your parents against me. This is only what you yourself have told me. But your love for me overcame that obstacle. Your parents gave you their blessing, and I made up my mind to marry you in spite of the hatred of the whole family. I hoped to find protection in your love and to endeavour to do my best to dispel the dislike of your family for myself. Now I see that I have made a mistake. You saw for yourself how kindly and politely I received your sisters. Their hostile manners have forced me to keep them at a distance: but I have not uttered a wrong word about them. And what is the result? Hardly a week has passed since their arrival, and already your manner towards me is changed. You forget, or you daren't keep

your promises to me; you spend a much shorter time with me: you are constrained and embarrassed; you are much colder to me. Don't try to deny it and don't try to excuse it; you will only be dishonest if you do. I know that you still love me, but you are afraid to show it. You are afraid of your sisters, and so you are distant, and even avoid being left alone with me! What I say is strictly true. And you know that yourself. Tell me if I can place any confidence in the duration of your love? And is your love worthy of the name, if it hides itself in terror, because your bride doesn't happen to please your sisters' taste, as you have already known for long enough? And what, pray, will happen to me, if I don't find favour in your parents' eyes? Would that make your love entirely disappear? No. Alexei Stepanovitsch, honourable men neither love nor act as you do. As you know that your relations cannot endure me, their presence ought to make you redouble your affection and respect for me. Then they would never have dared to open their mouths against me. Instead of this, you have permitted them to calumniate me in your presence. I know everything they have been accustomed to say against me. All this convinces me that your love is only empty sentiment which will not last, and that it is much better for us to part now than to lead a life of unhappiness together. I will give you two days in which to consider what I have just said to you. You can continue your visits; but for the next two days I will only see you in the presence of others, and I shall make no allusion to this conversation. Then I shall demand that you, as an honourable man, will make it a matter of conscience to tell me whether you feel prepared to protect me from your relatives or from anyone else who regards me with hostility, and whether you will compel your sisters to cease calumniating me in my absence. To break off an engagement just a week before the wedding is a great misfortune for any well-bred girl; but I would sooner face trouble boldly than have to endure it for a lifetime. You know that I am not in love with you; but I have grown to care for you, and I have no doubt my love would be more sincere and more lasting than yours. And now, farewell! To-day and to-morrow we are strangers to each other." With these words she quitted

the room, closing the door after her. Alexei Stepanovitsch, whose eyes had long since been filled with tears, and who had several times attempted to speak, was not permitted a moment in which to reply. He stood thunderstruck unable to collect his thoughts. At length, realising that he was in danger of losing his beloved Sofia Nikolaievna for ever, this feeling of desperation roused the courage and energy which even the weakest and slackest natures can exhibit for a short time. He rushed home, and when his sisters—utterly ignoring the agitated and disturbed appearance of the young manreceived him with their usual sneers and jeers, he burst out in fury and reproached them in a way that terrified them. The anger of an ordinarily forbearing and patient man is always terrible. Among other things, Alexei Stepanovitsch informed his sisters that if they dared to utter another insulting word in his presence, whether about his bride or himself, he would leave the house instantly; would not have anything more to do with them; and would write and tell his father all about them. This was enough. Alexandra Stepanovna remembered the rebuke administered to her by her father only too well. She knew what a storm any complaint of her brother's would arouse, and what frightful consequences to herself she might expect. Both sisters threw themselves, sobbing, on Alexei Stepanovitsch's neck, entreated his pardon, and, crossing themselves, swore that nothing of the sort should ever happen again; that they themselves were really very fond of Sofia Nikolaievna: and that it was only concern for his own health. and in order to tease him out of running on such a lot of tiresome errands, that they had ventured to make a few silly jokes. That same day they lost no time in hurrying off to Sofia Nikolaievna and treating her with marked civility.

She was aware of what had happened, and very triumphant. In the meantime the bridegroom's state of mind was deplorable. His love—grown more quiet and placid through his daily intercourse with Sofia Nikolaievna by reason of her calm and unaffected kindness towards him and by the immediate prospect of their union, and which, to a certain extent, he had tried to conceal from the ill-natured shafts of his sister's wit—now flamed up with such fire and

passion that for the moment he was capable of any sacrifice. any act—even of heroism. All this was conveyed by the expression on his beautiful features and in his sparkling eyes, whenever, during the course of the endless two days, he presented himself before Sofia Nikolaievna. It cost her something to refrain from giving him a word or even a look of encouragement: but she held fast to her resolve not to shorten the period of probation. She herself was astonished at the compassion and trouble in her heart. Now she realised that she really loved this shy, silent youth, who was so passionately devoted to her that he would inevitably die if she discarded him. But at last the wearisome three days were over. Early on the morning of the third day Alexei Stepanovitsch stood in the Subins' drawing room, awaiting his betrothed. The door opened, and in walked Sofia Nikolaievna, fairer and lovelier than ever, a soft smile playing round her lips, and her eyes so full of love, that, as she came towards Alexei Stepanovitsch, with outstretched hand, he lost control of his senses for the moment, and stood staring at her in silence. Recovering himself but without daring to touch the offered hand, he fell at his bride's feet, and with fiery eloquence and a thousand tears, gave vent to all his repressed love. Sofia Nikolaievna did not allow him to finish. She raised him up and told him that now she felt she had no cause to doubt the sincerity of his love, and added that she believed all his yows and promises and had no hesitation in placing her fate in his hands. She was kinder to him than she had ever been before. and permitted herself expressions of affection which, up to now, she had never uttered.

There now only remained five days before the wedding. All preparations were completed, and the bride and bride-groom could spend the time together without any fear of interruption. Five months had already elapsed since the betrothal, and Sofia Nikolaievna, faithful to her resolve to make a new man of her bridegroom, had neglected no opportunity of instilling into him those moral conceptions which were lacking in him, making what now seemed dark and confused, clear and distinct, and trying to eradicate all the erroneous notions, consequent upon his upbringing and the companionships of his youth. She encouraged him

to read numbers of books, and when the conversation turned on literature, she was very apt at correcting errors, resolving doubts, and confirming crude guesses by examples in real life. But all that Sofia Nikolaievna had been able to impart to her bridegroom during these past five months was equalled if not surpassed by what he learnt during these five days of intimacy; so much had the recent happenings sharpened the young man's intellect, enabling him to grasp things readily and with fresh interest. For my own part I cannot honestly say how all this moral instruction was effected. I can only repeat the assertions of teacher and pupil, who both declared that Alexei Stepanovitsch was duly reborn during this brief period. I willingly accept this statement, but at the same time possess overwhelming evidence that Alexei Stepanovitsch's progress in the realms of social deportment was not great. For instance, it is certain that only the day before the wedding he caused his bride great annovance, and made her exceedingly angry, by his disregard of the restraining influence of polite manners. And this was how it all happened. Two aristocratic ladies were paving a visit to Sofia Nikolaievna. Suddenly in marched a servant holding a bundle wrapped up in paper, and announced that Alexei Stepanovitsch had just sent this by his coachman, and had likewise sent word that Sofia Nikolaievna must be quick and make it up into a cap for his sister. Alexandra Stepanovitsch. It was barely half-anhour since Alexei had taken his departure from the house, and Sofia Nikolaievna—who was speechless with astonishment at this extraordinary commission—felt highly insulted. Her two friends, who had at first imagined that the parcel contained a present from the bridegroom, could not conceal their ironical smiles—and the bride, losing her customary self-command, ordered the bundle to be returned to Alexei Stepanovitsch with a message that he could take it to a milliner himself, and that some mistake had been made in bringing the work to her. However the real facts of the case were as follows. On his arrival at home the bridegroom had found his sister in a state of great perturbation: the milliner who had been commissioned to prepare the gala head-dresses for the wedding had suddenly fallen ill, and had returned all the materials. Now Alexei Stepanovitsch, recollecting that he had often

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noticed how clever his bride was at concocting hats and caps and wishing to oblige his distracted sister, called his servant and ordered him to hurry with the parcel of stuff to Sofia Nikolaievna, and ask her to be so very kind as to make the cap for Alexandra Stepanovitsch. The servant had something else in hand and gave the parcel to the coachman to deliver, and thus it happened that the polite request became an order. Alexei Stepanovitsch hurried off to explain matters to his bride, taking the objectionable parcel with him. Sofia Nikolaievna, who had not yet recovered her temper, was rendered still more indignant at the sight of her betrothed carrying the well-known bundle in his hand, and said a great many violent, bitter, and insulting things. The bridegroom, utterly confounded and disconcerted, made a clumsy apology, and was deeply mortified. Sofia Nikolaievna sent the material to a fashionable milliner. She felt that she had gone too far and was eager to make amends for her hasty utterances. But to her astonishment it was of no avail. Alexei Stepanovitsch was utterly unnerved by the scene she had made, and in spite of all his bride's efforts to copsole and cheer him, he remained gloomy and aggrieved.

The 10th of May, 1788, the day appointed for the wedding. dawned. The bridegroom arrived early at the bride's abode, and Sofia Nikolaievna, already out of humour as the result of the events of the preceding day, had the mortification of observing that Alexei Stepanovitsch still wore vesterday's unhappy expression. She had accustomed herself to picture him in a state of ecstatic bliss on the day which was to fulfil his fondest hopes, and now he made his appearance with a serious—even careworn—countenance. She rallied him about it, and he grew still more constrained. Of course he protested that he was the happiest of mortals, and so forth; but all the usual extravagant phrases, which formerly had caused her such pleasure when uttered by him, now fell on her ears in hollow and forced accents. They soon parted, not to meet again until six o'clock in the evening at the church where the bridegroom would await his bride.

The most painful doubts arose in Sofia Nikolaievna's mind. Could she indeed expect any happiness in the future? Gloomy forebodings harassed her. She reproached herself for her

MARRIAGE OF THE YOUNGER BAGROV

violence, and her insulting remarks: nothing in the episode had warranted such an outbreak of passion: what was there in this blunder of Alexei Stepanovitsch, for her to seize on it in this way? Such mistakes were frequent enough on his part, but unluckily it had so happened that her two visitors were ladies who had no love for her; and that knowledge had caused her to lose all sense of dignity, and had excited her natural irritability to the highest degree. She felt that she had wounded Alexei Stepanovitsch to the quick, recognised her mistake, but could do nothing to mend matters. All she realised in the depths of her soul was, that she was bound to fall into like errors. The immense responsibility of her task to re-fashion a seven-and-twenty-year-old man according to her own ideas—came afresh to her consciousness. A whole lifetime to be spent in the society of a husband inferior to herself, a man whom, in spite of her love, she could not thoroughly respect: an endless conflict between dissimilar tastes and opinions; and the impossibility of any mutual understanding—this was the perspective which stretched before the poor girl, and her strong will began to waver. A hitherto unknown feeling crept into her heart-doubt of her own strength. But what could be done? Should she dismiss her bridegroom on the very day of the wedding, thereby causing unspeakable anguish to her old father, who was now grown accustomed to the soothing thought that his daughter would be happily settled in life? Should she give her enemies —and especially the two witnesses of her discomfiture of the previous day—the satisfaction of seeing her expose herself to the gossip, absurd conjecture, and, probably, actual calumny of the whole city? Should she break the heart of this man who really loved her devotedly? And all this merely from a fear of not being able to succeed in a design which she had so often contemplated, and whose accomplishment was, to a certain extent, most brilliantly effected! "No, this shall never be! God will support me. Our Lady of Smolensk will be my Helper and will give me strength to overcome my sinful passions." So thought Sofia Nikolaievna, and prayer restored her courage and peace of mind.

The Church of the Assumption was close to the Subins' home, and in those days stood in a wide, open space. Long

before six o'clock, this space was crowded by all the curious sight-seers of the town. Before the porch of the Subins' house the carriages of the grand personages, who had been invited to accompany the bride, were drawn up; while the general company assembled in the church. The bride was dressed for the wedding. Her little brother, the three-year-old Nikolinka, whose birth had cost his mother her life, put on his sister's shoes according to time-honoured custom—not entirely without the help of the maids. Shortly before six o'clock the bride's toilette was completed, and after receiving her father's blessing, she made her appearance in the salon. The costly bridal attire gave fresh lustre to her beauty. The road from the bridegroom's house to the church lay past the Subins' residence, and from the windows of her salon Sofia Nikolaievna caught a sight of Alexei Stepanovitsch in the English-built coach, drawn by four superb horses from the Bagrov stud, She even had an opportunity of making a friendly sign to him, as he leant out of the coach when passing, and looked into the room. Directly after him came the bridegroom's sisters, with Madame Alakaieva, and the gentlemen who escorted them. Sofia Nikolaievna would not permit her bridegroom to be kept waiting, and in spite of all remonstrances followed him to church without any delay. She entered the building with a calm and dignified demeanour, gave her hand to the bridegroom with a triendly smile, but was provoked by the melancholy expression on his face: and no one present could fail to observe that neither bride nor bridegroom shewed much joy during the ceremony. The church was brilliantly lighted and thronged with spectators. The Episcopal Choir exerted itself to the utmost. From every point of view it was a grand and splendid marriage. At the conclusion of the marriageservice, the young wedded pair were escorted to the Subins' house by all the wedding guests. Dancing instantly commenced, and was continued until an early, but magnificent supper was served. All those guests who had the entry to Nikolai Feodorovitsch's room thronged there to offer him their congratulations. The next few days the festivities proceeded in the following order: a dinner, a ball, visits, and then again a dinner, and another ball; in short, the usual routine of the fashionable city life of to-day.

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The shadows which had clouded the young couple's brows when they plighted their troth had long since vanished. They were supremely happy. No one could see them without feeling delight, and frequently their friends would exclaim: "What a charming little pair!" At the end of a week they decided to set off to Bagrovo, whither Alexei Stepanovitsch's two sisters had already betaken themselves three days after the wedding, Sofia Nikolaievna sending an affectionate letter to her parents-in-law by them.

Alexei Stepanovitsch's two sisters had recently grown more circumspect in their behaviour, thanks to their brother's unexpected outburst of wrath: in his presence, at any rate, all signs of hostility, insulting gibes, and equivocal glances disappeared, while their manner towards Sofia Nikolaievna had grown positively affable—a circumstance which in a way led her astray as to its real meaning. Alexei had great hopes of this intimacy between his sisters and his wife. Naturally enough, the former had been forced to play a poor part, both at the wedding and during the ensuing days, and they lost no time in taking their departure. Arrived at home, that is to say at Bagrovo, they kept their resolution to act with caution and to hide their detestation of Sofia Nikolaievna from their father; but once alone with their mother and their two other sisters, they described all that had occurred at the wedding and in the city with such malignant cunning and skill as could not fail to excite a great feeling of animosity towards the new relative. They took care not to omit mention of the savage rage and threats of their brother over their quite innocent jokes about Sofia Nikolaievna; but they invariably spoke amiably of her in Stepan Michailovitsch's presence, never saying anything directly bad of her, while they lost no opportunity of machinating against her in any stealthy way. This plotting called for skilful handling, so Jelisaveta and Alexandra Stepanovitsch decided that no one should interfere in the matter and undertook to carry it through themselves. My grandfather was very full of enquiries about the wedding, asking all about the invited guests, the condition of old Subin's health, and above all the general news of the town. The daughters praised everything, but their compliments had a distinctly bitter flayour, which did

not escape the old fellow's notice. By way of a joke, and also perhaps by way of a hint to his daughters, he turned to Ivan Petrovitsch Karataiev, and remarked: "Well, what have you to say about your sister-in-law, Brother Ivan? This backwards-and-forwards talk of my ladies' parlour doesn't help me much, but you, as a man, can explain things better." In spite of all his wife's winks and nods, Ivan Petrovitsch replied with great gusto: "Yes, I can tell you all about her, little father: there's not such another fine lass in the whole world as Alexei's catch. A glance from her is worth a rouble. And, my word, she's a clever girl too! But I must admit she's proud, and not fond of a joke: if you try to spoon with her, she pulls such a face you have to shut up." "I can easily see. Brother, that she snapped you up pretty sharply," retorted the old man, and then he laughed, and added: "After all there's no harm in that." As a result of this talk, and also from the letter which Sofia Nikolaievna had sent him, Stepan Michailovitsch formed an exceedingly flattering opinion of his unknown daughter-in-law. The news of the approaching visit of the happy pair caused great excitement in the quiet. unpretentious household of these homely country folks. Every thing had to be smartened up, and much thought was given to clothes and such like matters. This Sofia Nikolajevna was a fashionable city dame, who in spite of her lack of fortune had been accustomed to a life of luxury, and naturally she would be very scornful and difficult to please. This was the way everyone thought and spoke of her, with the exception of the old man. There being no spare-room available in the house, Tania was forced to vacate her pretty corner room whose windows commanded a view of the garden and the clear stream of the Buguruslan beyond, with its banks clothed with green bushes, the home of the silvery-voiced nightingales. Tania had no particular fancy to exchange her room for the bath-house ante-room, but there was no other accommodation for her. All her sisters were at home, and Karataiev and Erlykin slept in the hayloft. The day before the arrival of the young pair, the state bed with its silk hangings and the silk window-curtains arrived at Bagrovo. A servant was sent too who knew how to set up and arrange everything. couple of hours Tania's room was quite transformed. Stepan

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Michailovitsch admired these elegant appointments, but the women kind bit their lips with envy. At last a mounted messenger brought tidings of the arrival of the bride and bridegroom at the Mordvin village of Noikino, only eight versts from Bagrovo, where they had halted to change their clothes. In two more hours they would be at home! This news made no end of a commotion. The old man had already sent for the priest that morning, but, as the latter had not yet arrived, a man on horseback was sent off in haste to bring the holy man along at once. And meantime a most interesting scene was taking place at Noikino. The newly-wedded pair had sent a servant in advance to bespeak fresh horses, and as all Noikino knew Alexei Stepanovitsch, and Stepan Michailovitsch was venerated there as the benefactor of the whole community, the village population, great and small, men and women, some six hundred souls in all, flocked together outside the house where the grandees would alight. Sofia Nikolaievna, who had never seen any Mordvins before, was delighted with the beautiful and robust girls in their white, redembroidered shirts, black sashes, and silver coins and bells which decorated their heads, breasts, and shoulders. when she heard the plain, rough, but hearty congratulations of the crowd and their joyful shouts, she laughed and cried at the same time. "Ei, ei!" they screamed in their bad Russian, "Ei, ei, Alexei, what a wife God has given you! Ei, ei, how beautiful she is! How pleased our father Stepan Michailovitsch will be with her! God bless you both!" But when the young wife reappeared, clad in her rich, state attire, and took her seat once more in the coach, such a hubbub of excited and joyous admiration was raised that the horses nearly took fright. The bridal pair bestowed ten roubles upon the community to drink their health, and continued their journey.

And now from behind the stupendous threshing-floor which lay on a high mountain slope a huge coach came into view. "They are coming! they are coming!" rang through the house, as the whole of the servants dashed out into the courtyard, where they were soon joined by the field-labourers; while the children and young people ran to meet the coach. The old Bagrovs and the whole family gathered together on

the balcony, Arina Vasilevna wearing a silk gown and jacket with a gold-embroidered silk handkerchief on her head, while Stepan Michailovitsch, arrayed in an old-fashioned coat, newly-shaved, and with a cravat round his throat, stood on the topmost step. He held a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and his wife carried a loaf of bread and a silver salt-cellar. The daughters and sons-in-law were grouped around. The coach drew up, the newly-wedded pair alighted, sank at the feet of their parents, and then kissed them and everyone present. Scarcely was this ceremony concluded, and scarcely had the young wife turned again towards her father-in-law. than he took her hand, gazed in her brimming eyes, embraced her with great affection, and said: "Glory to God! Come and let us thank Him!" Still holding her hand, he led her through the crowd into the hall, where the priest arrayed in his vestments awaited them; and the old man stood beside Sofia Nikolaievna while Father Vasili chanted in loud tones: "Blessed be our God! Who Is, and Was, and Is to Be!"

SKETCH IV

THE YOUNG MARRIED PAIR AT BAGROVO

After the thanksgiving service in which my grandfather and his daughter in-law took a fervent part, everyone kissed the Cross. The priest sprinkled the newly-wedded couple and all who were present with holy water. Then the embracing and kissing began all over again, mingled with the usual congratulations and compliments: "I hope to win your love and friendship!" . . . "As one of the family, I beg to offer you my best wishes." This of course was said by those new relatives as yet unknown to the young wife. Stepan Michailovitsch was silent. He looked with great affection at the glowing cheeks and tearful eyes of Sofia Nikolaievna, listened attentively to what she said to everyone, and observed her manner towards all. Finally, he took her hand, and conducting her to the salon he seated himself on the sofa and motioned to the young pair to sit beside him. Arina Vasilievna seated herself at the far end of the sofa, beside her son. The daughters of the house and their husbands sat in a circle round the group. I must here remark that Stepan Michailovitsch as a rule would never sit in the drawing room, he only entered it on special occasions, and then only remained for a short time. His own room was the only one he liked in the whole house, with its homely old wooden gallery and the stairs leading to the house door. He had grown so accustomed to living in this one room that he felt quite uncomfortable and ill at ease in the drawing room. On this great occasion however, he quite conquered his aversion and was soon deep in a friendly chat with Sofia Nikolaievna. First he enquired after the health of his good friend, Nikolai Feodorovitsch, and expressed his deep sorrow when he was told that the sick man was growing weaker every day, remarking that if that were so he would not keep his dear guests too long at Bagrovo.

It is hardly necessary to remark that the young wife was not at all at a loss in the conversation, and was not merely polite but very winning and affectionate in her manner. Arina Vasilievna, who at heart was quite good-natured, followed her husband's example to the best of her ability and as much as she dared in the presence of her daughters. Aksinia Stepanovna had taken a fancy to her sister-in-law from the first, and was very kind and friendly towards her. The others remained silent, but it was not difficult to guess their thoughts from their expression. At the end of half-an-hour or so, the young wife whispered something in her husband's ear, who rose hastily and went into the adjacent bed-chamber prepared for him and his wife. Stepan Michailovitsch stopped talking, but Sofia Nikolaievna, with ready tact, managed to engage him in such a lively conversation that his attention was diverted, and he was quite surprised when, some minutes later, both folding-doors flew open and Alexei Stepanovitsch entered the room, carrying a great silver tray, so laden with wedding gifts that it positively bent under the load. Up sprang Sofia Nikolaievna, and taking a piece of the finest English cloth and a cloth-of-silver jacket, richly embroidered with gold thread, from the salver, handed them to her fatherin-law, observing that the embroidery was her own work. which was indeed a fact. Stepan Michailovitsch cast a doubtful glance at his son, who still stood holding the tray, but accepted the present quite affably and kissed his daughterin-law. Arina Vasilievna was the recipient of a silk headkerchief interwoven with gold and a great piece of rich Chinese embroidered silk, an extreme rarity in those days. Each sister-in-law received a piece of silk brocade, and each son-in-law a length of English cloth; but naturally these last presents were of slightly less value than the first. presentation occasioned a regular outburst of kissing, handkissing, bows, curtsies, and thanks. The doors of the salon fairly cracked with the pressure of the crowd of eager spectators of both sexes, while the greasy heads of chambermaids were timidly poked from the doors of all the bedchambers, with the notable exception of the richly decorated apartment of the young pair, into which, so far, none of the household had dared to penetrate. A hubbub now arose in

the dining room, where the servants were quite unable to keep out the throng of peasants, who were hindering them from laying the table. Stepan Michailovitsch, hearing what was the matter, rose from his seat, walked to the door, and dismissed the intruders by a look, simply saying: "Begone!"

Dinner took its usual course. The bridal couple sat side by side between the father and mother. The dishes were numerous, each richer and more substantial than the last. Stepan the cook had spared neither cinnamon, pepper, cloves, nor butter. The kindly father-in-law in the most amiable way urged his new little daughter to eat ; and the little daughter ate, while praying Heaven that she might not expire the next day from the effects of the meal. The conversation was of a somewhat limited character, partly because the business of eating left little time for talk, partly because no one had much talent in that line and everyone was more or less nervous. To this must be added the fact that Erlykin, when sober, was remarkably sparing of words a circumstance which had gained him the reputation of being a most gifted and learned individual, while Karataiev never presumed to open his mouth in the presence of his father-inlaw unless addressed, and then confined himself for the most part to repeating the last words of anyone's remark, as for instance: "The hay would have been carried very successfully if it had not come on to rain."--" If it had not come on to rain," Karataiev would repeat. Or "The rye has blossomed very well, but this frost was quite unexpected."-" This frost was quite unexpected," Karataiev would echo promptly, and these repetitions were frequently very tiresome. The old folks had quite forgotten to order champagne from Ufa, and the health of the young couple was drunk in a strawberry liqueur, three years old and as thick as oil, whose rich odour filled the entire dining hall. Vanka Masan, wearing boots which reeked of tallow and a new coat which gave him somewhat the appearance of a dancing-bear, marched round the table, presenting to each in turn a glass goblet, decorated with white flowers and a blue spiral right up the centre of the stem. Then came the young couple's turn to return thanks; and it was indeed a great trial to poor Sofia Nikolaievna to have to drink out of the glass which the thick lips of Karataiev had

just touched. But she shewed no disgust, and was preparing to drink off the whole glassfull out of politeness, when her father-in-law checked her, remarking: "You must not drink all that, my dear little daughter, or you will have a sad headache: this liqueur is very sweet and delicious, but you are not accustomed to it and it's too strong for you." Sofia Nikolaievna vowed that such a costly beverage could not possibly harm anyone, and begged permission to have another sip, whereupon the old man playfully handed her the glass for another taste.

It was pretty evident to the whole family that Stepan Michailovitsch was charmed with his daughter-in-law, and delighted with everything she said. Sofia Nikolaievna was quite aware of it, too, though on two separate occasions she had been surprised at signs of momentary displeasure on the part of her father-in-law. During dinner she frequently found him looking at her with an expression of great affection. At last the long—and to Sofia Nikolaievna—wearisome country feast, which she had done her best to enliven by her gay conversation, came to an end. Everyone rose from his or her seat. His son and daughters kissed old Stepan Michailovitsch's hand in turn. Sofia Nikolaievna attempted to do so, but the old man drew his hand away and kissed and embraced her instead. This withdrawal of his hand had already occurred once before, and, true to her impulsive nature. Sofia Nikolaievna exclaimed: "Why do you refuse me your hand little father? I am your daughter, and entitled to kiss it with love and respect." The old man, looking very seriously and fixedly at his daughter-in-law, replied gently: "Although I love you very dearly, my hand is only given to my own begotten children to kiss. I am not a Pope."1

All the company now returned to the salon, and resumed their former seats. Aksiutka served coffee, which the old man did not like and which only made its appearance on festive occasions, although all the rest of the family were very fond of it. Directly after coffee Stepan Michailovitsch rose and said: "It is now high time for us all to go to bed. Our dear guests must be very tired after their long journey." Saying

¹ The Popes, as Russian Priests are called, offer their hands to be kissed, after bestowing their blessing. [Tr. S. R.]

this, he went to his own room, accompanied by his son and daughter-in-law. "Here is my nest, little daughter," he said gaily, "sit down, if you have the mind to stay here awhile! Just once in a way I have sat in the drawing room with you; nearly strangled by this horse collar, too," (here he tore off his cravat) "Alexei of course knows my ways; but in future I beg you to come and sit with me here, whenever you feel inclined to do so." He kissed his daughter-in-law, gave his son his hand to kiss, and dismissed them, after which he undressed and lay down to rest himself after the unwonted emotion and fatigue of the day. Almost instantly a deep slumber overwhelmed him, and soon a mighty snoring caused the bed curtains, which Masan had drawn around his old master, to rise and fall in measured waves of linen.

The other members of the family followed the example of the head of the house. The sons-in-law, who had eaten heartily (Karataiev had evidently drunk heartily, too) betook themselves to sleep in the hayloft over the stable. The daughters all assembled in their mother's bedroom. And here arose such an excited whispering and criticising that not one of these ladies had a wink of sleep that afternoon. What had not poor Sofia Nikolaievna to suffer at their hands! How the sisters-in-law pulled her to pieces! The evident partiality of Stepan Michailovitsch for his daughter-in-law had put the whole family in a rage. Only one good soul among them, Aksinia Stepanovna Nagatkina, tried to stand up for her; but she only succeeded in getting herself banished from the room and thenceforward shut out from all family councils, while in addition to all this a fresh and still more insulting epithet was added to her previous nickname of "The Dear Simpleton," which clung to her to her dying day. But in spite of this, and in spite of all persecution on the part of her family, she never ceased to take the part of her cherished sister-in-law.

The young pair withdrew into their richly-adorned chamber. With the assistance of her maid, the nimble black-eyed Parascha, Sofia Nikolaievna set to work to unpack the numerous trunks and chests which had been conveyed in the English coach. Already the lively Parascha had made friends with all the house-servants and knew the names of all the old

people in the settlement who were specially worthy of notice. Sofia Nikolaievna had come provided with a rich store of trifling gifts of every description, and she set to work to portion them out according to the future recipients' age, length of service, or the consideration in which they were held by their masters. As neither of the young folks felt in the least tired or in need of sleep. Sofia Nikolaievna, after exchanging her beautiful dress for one of simpler fashion, left Parascha to finish the unpacking and arranging of the room, and, regardless of the heat, went for a stroll with her husband, who wished to shew her his favourite haunts . . . the little birch wood; the island clothed with linden trees, already green; the clear current of the encircling stream. And how lovely it was there, at this season of the year, when the freshness of spring blended with the warmth of summer! Alexei Stepanovitsch, passionately in love and still intoxicated with happiness, was chilled and surprised when Sofia Nikolaievna, without evincing any delight at the sight of the exquisite little wood and the islet, and scarcely indeed paying the slightest attention to them, seated herself beside him in the shade on the bank of the swiftly-flowing river, and promptly engaged him in a long conversation about the family. She chattered away about the reception they had just had, about her sympathy for her father-in-law, adding that from the first moment she had noticed what a good impression she had made upon him. She added that she knew her mother-in-law would like her well enough, if only she were not so frightened of approaching her, and that Aksinia Stepanovna seemed the kindest of them all, though even she was not quite unprejudiced. "I can see and comprehend everything," she concluded," I know exactly who stirs up all the ill-will. Not a word, nor a look has escaped me; and I know what I have to expect. May God pardon those two sisters of yours-Jelisaveta and Alexandra Stepanovna!" But Alexei Stepanovitsch listened abstractedly to her remarks; the shade under the trees was so refreshing, where the tender green branches bowed themselves lovingly towards the water, the river, softly murmuring, hurried so swiftly along with its slily-flashing little fishes . . . his Sofia Nikolaievna, his adored wife, sat at his side with her arm flung round him . . . Heavens! who could give heed

to anything, complain about anything, feel any unhappiness? At such a moment one can scarcely hear aught, much less understand it . . . and Alexei Stepanovitsch neither heard nor understood a word of all his young wife was talking about. All his longings were so fully and so sweetly satisfied that he fell into a still day-dream and forgot everything around him. Sofia Nikolaievna continued her conversation. grew quite heated and passionate . . . and at last realised that her husband was not listening and was nearly asleen! She rose hastily. Then began a repetition of the same painful scene, the same conflict of mutual misunderstandings. which had already taken place on two previous occasions, but which this time was enacted with even greater virulence. All the former insults were repeated, only in stronger terms, and the passionate outbreak ended in tears and the bitterest reproaches for his indifference and listlessness. founded Alexei Stepanovitsch, cast thus from Heaven and shaken roughly out of his sweet reverie, vainly sought to pacify his wife by assuring her that all was going as well and smoothly as it possibly could, that she was only fancying injuries and offences, that everyone in the family liked her and it was quite impossible to do otherwise. But for all his agonised appeals and in spite of the boundless love which expressed itself in the look and voice of Alexei Stepanovitsch, Sofia Nikolaievna was incapable of understanding either the mind or heart of her husband, and only discovered fresh evidence of his coldness and indifference in his words! The discussion was becoming still more heated, and I know not to what a pitch it might have grown, had not Alexei Stepanovitsch caught sight of his sister Tatiana's waiting-maid, running towards them. Guessing that his father was awake and that they were being sought, he drew his wife's attention to the girl. Sofia Nikolaivna regained her composure in an instant, seized her husband by the hand, and hurried towards the house with him; but Alexei Stepanovitsch followed her in a sorrowful and dejected mood.

Great preparations had been made at Bagrovo for the entertainment of the servants, peasantry, and the neighbouring settlers. The necessary quantity of home-brewed beer had been prepared, and two dozen kegs of brandy purchased.

Before lying down to rest that afternoon, Stepan Michailovitsch had asked: "Are there many here from Noikino and Kiwazkoie?" to which Masan replied that everyone had come, including children and the old people. Stepan Michailovitsch smiled, and said: "Well, we must make them all welcome. Tell old Fedosia, the house-keeper, and the steward, Peter to see that everything is in readiness!" After a short nap Stepan Michailovitsch woke up in a still better humour than before. "Is all ready?" were his first words. "Long ago," was the reply. The old man dressed hastily, not in the irksome suit of state but in his beloved old woollen dressinggown, stepped out on the balcony, and proceeded down the stairs to superintend the preparations in person. Rough trestle-tables made of planks had been set up in the spacious green courtyard, which no hedge or boundary separated from the road. At regular intervals casks of beer and kegs of brandy stood on these tables, with great piles of white wheaten bread between. The house-servants were grouped together nearest the house; beyond them was the mass of peasantry; and still farther distant the much larger crowd of Mordvins of both sexes. Stepan Michailovitsch gave a hasty look round. and satisfying himself that all was in order, returned to the balcony. Here he was joined by his family. But he had barely time to enquire what had become of the newly-wedded pair, when Sofia Nikolaievna and her husband appeared. The old man welcomed his daughter-in-law with redoubled signs of affection and treated her quite as if she were his own child. "Now, Alexei," he exclaimed, "take your wife's hand and conduct her to welcome the servants and labourers: these folks all want to see their young mistress and kiss her hand. Come along!" He headed the little procession, followed by Alexei Stepanovitsch leading his wife by the hand. A short distance behind them came Arina Vasilievna supported by her daughters and sons-in-law. With the exception of Aksinia Stepanovna, the daughters of the house could illconceal their mortification. The increasing civility of Stepan Michailovitsch: this ceremonious installation of the detested Sofia Nikolaievna as the young house-mistress; her beauty and elegance, her perfections of manner and conversation; her respectful, enchanting, amiable bearing towards her

father-in-law-all served to excite and irritate their jealous dispositions. They felt themselves neglected and supplanted in their paternal home. "It does not matter so much to us." whispered Alexandra Stepanovna: "for after all what are we but lopped-off branches? But I cannot look at Tania without tears. What more has she to expect in this house? She is nothing but a maid-servant for Sofia Nikolaievna. As for you, poor mother, no one will have the least respect for you, now. All will be dancing attendance on the new mistress." Her voice trembled, and tears glittered in her big, rolling eyes. Meantime Stepan Michailovitsch had reached the party of servants, and shouted to the peasants: "Why are you standing apart there? Are you not the children of one and the same mother? Here," he continued, "is your voung mistress, whom your young master has known for a long time. When the time comes, you must serve these two as faithfully and willingly as you have served me and Arina Vasilievna! And they will always treat you with justice and mercy." At this, the whole assemblage threw themselves on the ground at the feet of the young couple. The young bride stood bewildered and scarcely knew what to do. She was not accustomed to such scenes. Her father-in-law. observing her embarrassment, remarked: "There's nothing in this sort of obeisance: their heads are not going to fall off. Now kiss your young lady's hand, and then you shall have a bite and sup!" Everyone rose and advanced towards Sofia Nikolaievna. She turned her head, the sprightly Parascha and her man-servant Feodor (one of her dower serfs) were there with the presents. On a sign from their mistress the two servants promptly handed her a chest and a bundle full of all manner of little articles. Not accustomed to having her hand kissed to such an extent, and at the same time unwilling to stand there like a stock, Sofia Nikolaievna began to kiss each person, who after receiving his or her present, tried to kiss her hand a second time, but was promptly rebuked by Stepan Michailovitsch who remarked that at this rate of proceeding they would not be able to have tea until it was time for supper. "You cannot kiss all of them-only a few of them—twice, little daughter," he said. "There are too many of them here. Kiss the old men and the old grannies;

I approve of that; the others must be content with your hand." But for all this shortening and simplifying, the wearying, tiresome ceremony lasted a very long while. Stepan Michailovitsch enlivened the proceedings considerably by his good humour, addressing the people by name and explaining their various callings. Many of the old men and women uttered simple greetings full of love and devotion: many even went: and all gazed with affection and reverence on the beautiful countenance of the new mistress. Sofia Nikolaievna was deeply moved. "Why are all these good people so ready to love me, why do they love me so much already?" thought she. "What have I done to deserve such love?" At last. after all young and old had kissed the young mistress' hand, after many had received a kiss from her, and after all present had received rich gifts. Stepan Michailovitsch took Sofia Nikolaievna by the hand, and together they walked towards the crowd of Mordvins. "Good-day, neighbour folk!" he cried gaily: "I am pleased to see you all assembled here. This young lady is your new neighbour. You must be very kind to her! Now I must beg you to drink her good health. and to accept my fullest hospitality." Loud and joyful shouts arose by way of answer: "Many thanks, Stepan Michailovitsch! God be praised! What a beautiful wife He has given Alexei! How beautiful how beautiful she is! This is your reward for your goodness, Stepan Michailovitsch!"

The feast began. Stepan Michailovitsch, accompanied by his whole family, returned to his favourite seat on the balcony. He observed that the time for tea, which they usually drank at six o'clock, was long since past. As a matter of fact it was considerably after seven. Already the long shadow of the house was verging more towards the South, and resting on the storehouse and stables. For long enough the samovar had hissed and bubbled on the big table set out near the balcony with Aksiutka in waiting. All took their seats round the table. Only old Stepan Michailovitsch could not tear himself away from his balcony, and still remained in his favourite perch, over which he had carefully spread his faithful old felt coverlet. On this occasion Tania served the tea, with Aksiutka as her assistant. Sofia Nikolaievna begged permission to sit beside

her father-in-law on the staircase, which was granted with evident signs of pleasure. The daughter-in-law sprang up nimbly, her half-empty tea-cup in her hand, and in an instant seated herself beside the old man. He caressed her fondly, and had another rug spread for her, lest her dress should be soiled. They chatted merrily together. Angry glances were cast at them by the party at the tea-table and malicious remarks were exchanged in whispers, without however causing the young husband to pay any attention to them. Of course he could not but help hearing them, but they were not the cause of his dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The loud voice of his father broke in upon his gloomy meditations: "Come here, Alexei! It's much cosier up here." Alexei joined the couple, sat down beside his father, and grew a little more cheerful. After tea, all remained sitting in their places, and chatted together until supper-time, which to-day was served later than usual—towards nine o'clock. At intervals the loud songs and ringing laughter of the merry crowd could be heard from the distance, where the shadows were growing thicker and darker. The company separated immediately after supper. Each crawled into his hole, as Stepan Michailovitsch was wont to say. When Sofia Nikolaievna bade the old man Good-night, she asked him to give her his blessing and make the sign of the Cross upon her, and this her fatherin-law did gladly, and kissed her with fatherly affection.

The mother-in-law and the eldest sister-in-law, Madame Nagatkina, accompanied the young couple to their bedchamber, and remained a little while with them. On leaving the room they were accompanied by Alexei Stepanovitsch. Sofia Nikolaievna hastened to dismiss her maid, and seated herself beside the open window, which looked out over the river, gliding along between its banks of willow and alder. The night was magnificent: the sunset after-glow lingered yet, as if resolved to blend with the red light of the dawn. The coolth of the neighbouring river and the fresh scent of the young leaves were wafted into the room together with the thrilling song of the nightingales. But Sofia Nikolaievna's mind was busied with other matters than these. Being a girl of great intelligence, she had known from the first what awaited her in her husband's family, and had made her plans

accordingly. But her life having always been spent in a city. she had no clear conception of the life of a none-too-rich country nobleman, such as dwelt scattered sparsely over the extent of the wide province. Everything was unpleasing to her: everything made a bad impression on her: the house, the garden, the little birchen wood, the islet. She was accustomed to the beautiful scenery of the rocky banks of the Bielaia as it flowed past Ufa; and this little village in the valley, the old wooden house weather-stained and time-worn, the mill-pond with its swampy banks, the endless clatter of the stamping mill—all this she found positively hateful. She liked no one in the place—beginning with the family and ending with the peasant children—with the exception of one person—Stepan Michailovitsch. If he had not been there, she would have given herself up to despair. She had met him with a preconceived good opinion: just at the first blush of the moment his somewhat rough exterior had shocked her-but the next minute his intelligent glance and his friendly smile had reassured her, the very accents of his voice had convinced her that this old man had great sympathy of heart and feeling, and she had resolved in her heart to love and be loved by him. She had known, quite early in her engagement, that all her future peace and happiness rested with her father-in-law. and had been fully prepared to spare no effort to win his approval: but now she had ended by actually falling in love with him herself; and this satisfactory part of the situation was balanced against the oppression in her heart. In this one respect Sofia Nikolaievna was perfectly content with herself -she had attained her goal, and very easily too. On the other hand, she was pained by the thought that in a moment of passion she had wounded her good husband: she waited for him in great anxiety and with impatience, but he made no sign of returning to her. Had she only known where he was. she would have lost no time in hastening to his side. longed to fall weeping on his neck, and to murmur: "Forgive me," and to wash the last lingering traces of displeasure from his heart in a torrent of tender words and caresses. But still Alexei Stepanovitsch did not return. These salutary instants of repentance, the enthusiastic love, the ardent desire to make full amends for the past all were in

vain. Such exaltation of the feelings can never be of long duration, and after some minutes Sofia Nikolaievna first felt astonishment, and finally anger, at her husband's continued absence. When at last he made his appearance, melancholy and ill at ease, instead of throwing herself into his arms and whispering: "Forgive me!"... almost before he crossed the threshold, Sofia Nikolaievna challenged him in an excited and far from amiable tone with the words: "In God's name where have you been? Why did you leave me alone like this? I have been in a fine state of mind, waiting here for you for two mortal hours!" "I have scarcely spent a quarter of an hour with my mother and sisters," replied Alexei Stepanovitsch in a low and miserable voice. "And they have been saying nothing but evil of me, blanning and slandering me, and no doubt you believed every word they said. Why do you look so downcast and unhappy?" Sofia Nikolaievna's face expressed the liveliest agitation and her beautiful eyes filled with tears. Her young husband grew still more uneasy and more alarmed. Her tears terrified him. "Sonitschka," he pleaded, "calm yourself: no one has spoken ill of you: who would think of doing such a thing? You have done nothing to merit it." Here, Alexei Stepanovitsch said what was not strictly true. Certainly no one had criticised his wife openly, nor had anyone actually said anything wrong about her; but by hints and allusions he had clearly been made to understand that his wife had evidently made up her mind to ingratiate herself with her father-in-law in order to domineer over and humiliate all the other members of the family: that it was easy enough to see through her tricks, that Alexei Stepanovitsch would think the same, in time, though just now he was her abject slave. Alexei Stepanovitsch paid no heed to all these hints and whisperings; but the anguish of mind, which he had endured since the scene on the island, was increased by this backbiting and ill-will, and his affectionate heart was sorely wounded. He merely replied: "I do not agree with you, dear mother," and left the room, not to return to his wife however, but to pace to and fro awhile in the dark and empty hall. The seven windows stood open, and he peered out, gazing towards the rookery, now wrapped in shadow . . . the bosky river

banks, so often the scene of his childish games . . . he heard the throbbing notes of the nightingale . . . the distant rattle of the mill . . . the cry of the night bird. His heart grew comforted, and he returned to his room without a suspicion of what was in store for him. Luckily, Sofia Nikolaievna recollected herself in time: remorse awoke in her heart, perhaps not quite with its former energy, but enough to change her tone. She turned, full of love and compassion, towards her husband, and implored his forgiveness with kisses and caresses. In terms of the sincerest affection she told him how happy she felt to have gained the sympathy and regard of his father: besought him to always treat her with candour and trust; proved to him the absolute necessity for mutual confidence and the soft heart of her husband was won. He was calmed and comforted, and told her a great deal that he had made up his mind never to repeat, lest he should set his wife at variance with the rest of the family. After he had thus relieved his overwrought heart, he lay down and instantly fell asleep. Sofia Nikolaievna however could not sleep, and lay awake in earnest meditation. At length she recollected that next day she had to rise very early, having resolved to visit her father-in-law at daybreak on his balcony, long before the rest of the family were astir, intending to please the old man and to take the opportunity of having a private conversation with him. She tried to sleep, and at last succeeded in doing so, but with difficulty and not until the greater part of the night had passed.

Sofia Nikolaievna awoke next morning with the first sunbeam. Though she had slept little, up she sprang, refreshed and cheerful. She dressed herself hastily, kissed her husband, told him that she was going to talk with the old man, but that he might sleep for another two hours yet—and hastened to her father-in-law. Stepan Michailovitsch had slept rather longer than usual, and had only just stepped out on the gallery. Morning—the glorious enchanting May morning in the full splendour and pomp of spring-tide, with the joyful thousand-tongued choir of all living things, and the long shadows where the misty and fragrant dews of night were absorbed by the triumphant rays of the sun—all this magic whispered in the soul of Sofia Nikolaievna, although, as yet,

she and 'Nature were strangers. The sudden apparition of his daughter-in-law was a joyful surprise for the old man. Her rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, carefully curled hair, and charming morning-gown proved that no sooner had the daughter-in-law been awakened than she had made haste to dress and be ready to pay her respects to her father-in-law. Stepan Michailovitsch had a great liking for lively, brisk, clever folk. As Sofia Nikolaievna possessed all these qualities. she found great favour in his sight. "Why have you got up so early?" he asked, as he embraced her. "You have not had nearly enough sleep. You are not accustomed to these early hours, and you will have a bad headache!" "No, father," replied Sofia Nikolaievna, returning his embrace warmly, "I am quite accustomed to rise early. Ever since I was a child I have had a great many duties and much responsibility. I have had to look after a whole family, and a sick father too. It is only quite recently that I have begun to rise rather later. But this morning I woke very early. Alexei" (the old man frowned). . . . "told me that you must have been up and about a long time, and so I have come in the hope that you won't drive me away, but let me stay here and make tea for you." This simple speech was uttered with such warmth and such genuine feeling, that the old man was quite touched, and kissing Sofia Nikolaievna on the brow, replied: "Well, if that's the case, many thanks to you, little daughter! We will have a cosy chat together and you shall make the tea." Asiutka had already set the samovar on the table. Stepan Michailovitsch gave orders that no one was to be awakened, and Sofia Nikolaievna set to work to This she did as skilfully and gracefully as if prepare tea. she had been accustomed to do it all her life. The old man watched this beautiful young woman with delight, she had so little in common with his own familiar women-kind, who never touched a thing but it slipped out of their clumsy hands. Everything was prepared just as he liked it: that is to say the tea was strong; the tea pot, wrapped in a napkin, was set on the samovar; the cup was filled to the brim, and Sofia Nikolaievna handed it to him without letting the least drop overflow into the saucer; the fragrant liquor was so hot that it scalded his lips. "You are a real enchantress," said he,

astonished and delighted, as he took the cup from her and tasted the tea. "You know exactly what I like. If you are like this with your husband, he will be a happy man!" In an ordinary way the old man drank his morning tea alone. and only when he had finished were the family allowed to drink theirs; but this day, as he accepted his second cup from his daughter-in-law, he invited her to pour out a cup for herself and to sit down beside him. "I never drink more than two cups, but to-day I have a fancy for a third," he said in his hearty voice; "and I really think I never tasted such good tea before!" In fact Sofia Nikolaievna behaved with such affectionate consideration towards him that her influence upon so susceptible a nature as Stepan Michailovitsch's was irresistible and could not fail to put him in a still better humour. He made his daughter-in-law take another cup of tea and eat one of the home-made rusks, for which the Bagrovo ovens were famous. The tea-things were then cleared away, and the father-in-law and his daughter began to talk in the most friendly and intimate way. Sofia Nikolaievna displayed such a depth of feeling and such bewitching charm that she quite won the heart of Stepan Michailovitsch. the middle of their pleasant chat he suddenly asked: "And where is your husband? Is he still asleep?" "Alexei was awake when I got up," replied Sofia Nikolaievna; "but I told him he had better go to sleep again." The old man drew his brows close together and was silent. "Listen to me, dear little daughter-in-law," he said, after a pause, not speaking with anger, but with gravity, "you are so sensible, that I can speak the truth to you without mincing matters. and it is my practice to speak out and not keep things at the back of my mind. If you take my advice, well and good, If you reject it, you must please yourself—you are not my own child. I do not like your way of addressing your husband as 'Alexei.' It is only right for you to add his father's name: you are not his father, nor yet his mother. A servant is called plain 'Alexei.' A wife must treat her husband with respect if she desires his to be respected by others. And I was far from pleased yesterday, when you sent him off to bring in the presents, and made him stand holding the tray exactly as if he had been a servant. And just now you tell me that

you have ordered him to remain in bed. A wife must never presume to give her husband orders: that leads to no good. Perhaps these are some of your city customs, but they are no good to us with our old country ways." Sofia Nikolaievna heard him with great respect, and replied in such earnest and sincere tones that each word went straight to the old man's heart: "I am grateful to you, father, for not hesitating to tell me if my behaviour has annoved or vexed you in any way. Not only will I cheerfully do exactly as you wish, but I see for myself how wrong I have been. I am only young, father. and I have had no one to guide me or advise me. My father has been a bed-ridden invalid for the last six years. I have treated my husband as I have seen other women treat theirs: but in future you shall never see anything to complain of in this way, nor will I change my manner when no one is by to criticise me. Oh, father!" she added, and great tears like pearls filled her eyes, "I love you with a daughter's love, and will you not accept me as your own child! Blame me, chide me when I do wrong, and forgive me afterwards: but never cherish any anger against me in your heart! My youth and my passionate heart may, any moment, lead me into making a false step: only recollect that I stand alone in a family of strangers. I know them not and they know not me: do not you forsake me!" With this she threw herself upon her father-in-law's neck, embracing him like an affectionate daughter, and kissing his breast and hands. The old man, whose eyes, likewise, were overflowing with tears, did not withdraw his hand this time, and replied: "So be it then." As we have already noted, Stepan Michailovitsch possessed unerring instinct. Bad people invariably repelled him, while the good as unfailingly attracted him. At the first sight of her he had been very much drawn towards his daughter-in-law; but now he fully comprehended and appreciated her worth, and thereafter never ceased to love her. This feeling was fated to undergo much test and trial in the future, but it neither failed nor faltered to his dving day. . . .

Soon after this little scene Alexei Stepanovitsch appeared, and after him, the whole family. For quite a long time the daughters had been pressing and urging their mother to join their father outside in the gallery; but she had not the

courage to take their advice, as Stepan Michailovitsch's previous order that no one was to be awakened, amounted to a command that he was not to be disturbed by any of them. She only made her appearance now, because the old gentleman had sent his servant Masan to summon his wife and daughters to his presence. All traces of tears had disappeared from Sofia Nikolaievna's countenance, and she greeted her mother and sisters-in-law with especial politeness and amiability. Neither was there anything specially to be noted in Stepan Michailovitsch's manner, but the obvious joy and happiness of Sofia Nikolaievna struck the same note of alarm in the jealous breasts of the second and third sisters-in-law, who knew what it betokened Stepan Michailovitsch now directed that the newly-married couple should pay their round of formal visits to relatives, taking each in order of seniority. According to his arrangement it was decided that their first visit should be paid next day to Aksinia Stepanovna Nagatkina, who left the house that afternoon in order to make her preparations. With her went Jelisaveta Stepanovna, to help her sister to get all ready to entertain the young pair at dinner. The Nagatkina estate was fifty versts away, but the good Bagrovian horses could easily cover this distance without fatigue, and six o'clock the next morning was fixed for the hour of departure.

Stepan Michailovitsch made no effort to conceal his affection for his daughter-in-law. He would not let her leave his side, and seemed never to tire of her conversation. Soon he began asking her all about her family history and her life in the city. He listened to all she had to relate with the greatest interest and sympathy, and frequently uttered terse and pithy comments of his own. Sofia Nikolaievna was much impressed by the weight and significance of his remarks, and saw plainly that he had not merely assumed pretended interest in her, but had formed a just estimate of her worth. For his own part Stepan Michailovitsch acquainted Sofia Nikolaievna with the minutest details concerning the present and future circumstances of her new family. He told all in such a simple and scrupulous way, and with such candour and good feeling, that Sofia Nikolaievna—the sole one there capable of understanding and valuing his true worth—was quite enraptured.

She had never met a man of his type before. Her own father was a clever and amiable old man, of slightly irritable temper and upright disinterested character, but weak, a slave to the rigour and formality of those days; a smooth servile official, who had worked his way up from a mere government clerk to the rank of vice-regent. But here, on the contrary, she recognised a man who, however uncultured and rough his exterior might appear, and whatever his recorded acts of violence might be still possessed intelligence, good nature, a love of truth, and the most steadfast adherence to all moral laws. A man who not only acted honourably in every relation of life, but who never spoke anything but the truth. And from these traits, the vivid imagination of the noble young woman formed an ideal of masculine worth and dignity, quite new to her, which appeared loftier than any she had as vet encountered. On him depended her position in her new family, probably her whole future happiness.

Dinner was a much more lively meal than on the preceding day. The young wife was again seated between her husband and father-in-law: Arina Vasilievna however had resumed her usual seat opposite her husband. Directly after dinner Aksinia and Jelisaveta left for Nagatkino. As the old man was preparing to lie down for his customary nap, he said to his wife: "Well, Arischa, it seems as if God had given us a splendid daughter-in-law. It would be a sin not to love her." "It would indeed, Stepan Michailovitsch," replied Arina Vasilievna: "if Sofia Nikolaievna pleases vou, she pleases me." The old man grimaced, but said nothing, and the old lady hurried off as quickly as possible, in order to avoid any further discussion on the subject, as well as to communicate this weighty observation of their father to her daughters, which they all instantly recognised as a command to be obeyed, and not, at any rate openly, set at nought.

Although Sofia Nikolaievna had slept but little the night before, she could not rest that afternoon. Once more she accompanied her husband for a walk, as he suggested, in the old birch forest and beside the river. This expedition brought no uncomfortable developments in its train. Filled with joyful confidence in the future and overflowing with love and admiration for her father-in-law, she tried to impart her own

delight and rapture to her husband. As is so often the case with excitable and enthusiastic characters, she realised to a certain extent how her own youth and beauty had enchanted the old man, and at that moment loved him even more dearly than before. Alexei Stepanovitsch listened to his charming wife's lively conversation with great pleasure and surprise, and said to himself: "Thank God that she and my father get on so well together: everything will be all right now." He kissed her hand, and vowed again that he was the happiest man in the world, that in her he possessed a jewel whose like was not to be found in the whole of creation, and to whom everyone must needs pay homage. All the same, he could not fully understand his wife, nor appreciate the subtlety of mind which recognised the worth and nobility of Stepan Michailovitsch's character. For his own part he held to his original conception of his father as a man to be respected. certainly, but more feared than liked. But to-day Sofia Nikolaievna paid no heed to trifling vexations. She even shared her husband's feelings in admiring everything around her—the rugged birch wood, the deep river. . . . She actually spoke of her sisters-in-law quite affectionately!

Immediately on awakening from his after-dinner sleep. Stepan Michailovitsch had his daughter-in-law and her husband. as well as the other members of the family, summoned to his presence. For long enough he had not been known to be so cheerful and good-tempered. Was it his sleep that had done him good, or was his heart extra light? that as it might, everyone was agreed that the old master was quite exceptionally amiable and jolly. Ever since hearing about her father's very significant utterance, Alexandra Stepanovna had made up her mind to behave with more affability, while Arina Vasilievna and Tania were only too pleased to be allowed to make friends, and talk with the bride: even Karataiev at a sign from his wife began boldly to repeat the concluding words of any remark, whether addressed to himself or not: only the General preserved his deep and portentous silence. The whole family circle was extraordinarily lively and talkative. The old man had a fancy to drink tea earlier than usual, of course in the shadow of the house and near the balcony staircase; and the daughter-

in-law was invested with the dignity of making the afternoon tea. Tania was quite content to resign this office to her After tea Stepan Michailovitsch ordered two carriages to be got ready, and made his daughter-in-law sit beside him, while the whole party drove to the mill. You may recollect that my grandfather had a great fondness for this mill, and understood the working of it thoroughly. His mill-stones and crushing gear were in excellent order, even if the mill buildings were dilapidated and neglected and overgrown by sedges. He loved to explain all the mechanism of the mill, and had an especial fancy to shew every detail to his daughter-in-law. He was delighted with her utter ignorance and curiosity. frequently with her terror, as when he suddenly released a torrent of water from all four conduits and everything around her began to shake and rumble and rattle, while the mill stones began to revolve swiftly, growling and buzzing, the floor trembled, and all the objects near disappeared under a cloud of flour. All this was quite new to Sofia Nikolaievna. but not particularly delightful. In order to gratify her fatherin-law, however, she pretended to be interested, asked questions about everything, and admired all that was shewn The father-in-law was honestly delighted with her sympathy; he kept her a long time examining the mill, and when at last he conducted her to the verge of the mill-dam, where the young husband and his two sisters were busy with their fishing-rods, a great outburst of laughter greeted them. The old gentleman and the young lady were literally covered with flour. Stepan Michailovitsch, accustomed to this powdering, had shaken and dusted off some of his floury bloom at the door, but he could not help but laugh himself when he saw his daughter-in-law, who had been perfectly unconscious of her ghostly appearance. Naturally, she laughed and jested more than anyone, when she discovered what was amusing them all, and only regretted she had no mirror to show her how becomingly she had been powdered for a ball. As the others were quite absorbed in their angling, the old man took his young miller's-wife, as he styled her for the rest of the evening, for a walk beside the dam, over the bridge, along the banks of all the creeks and inlets of the expanse of water, and back again along the dam to where the fishers were still angling in

the lock, and where the portly Arina sat and watched their performance. Wherever the carriage took them it was damp and dirty. It was almost impossible to cross the rickety wooden bridge in safety, and still more difficult to get along in the slush of the dam banks. All this disgusted the young wife in the highest degree; but, naturally, of this Stepan Michailovitsch observed nothing. The dirt and puddles were quite indifferent to him, and he neither noticed the evil smell of the stagnant pond nor the effluvium from the dung-plastered dam. He had made the place himself, and everything about it suited him exactly. The sun sank below the horizon, the night air was growing chill, and all betook themselves gaily home, the anglers laden with booty, fine perch, roach, and chub.

The steward was waiting for his old master beside the balcony, to discuss sundry agricultural matters with him. The bride rearranged her disordered dress. Meantime the fish were cooked and fried in sour cream, the largest perch being baked without any scaling, and at supper-time all were voted most excellent.

So ended the second day. They all went early to bed, for next morning the young pair were to rise betimes, and set out on their round of visits. . . . No sooner was Alexandra Stepanovna alone with her mother and younger sisters, than she threw off her irksome mask and gave free rein to her long-controlled rage and poisonous tongue. She saw only too well that all was lost; that her father was infatuated with his daughter-in-law; that her prophecies had been only too-well fulfilled; and that the sleek, sly intriguer had bewitched the old man. There was nothing to be done now but to get the young couple packed off to Ufa, and then to make new plans. She utilised the occasion to abuse Arina Vasilievna and Tania for their friendliness: "If I had not been on the alert," scolded Alexandra Stepanovna, "this fashionable madam, this beggarly granddaughter of a Cossack, would have befooled you, too."

Punctually at six o'clock the next morning the newly-wedded pair set out for Nagatkino in the English coach, to which six mettlesome Bagrovo-bred horses had been harnessed. Sofia Nikolaievna had managed to find time to prepare her father-in-law's tea, and he had parted from her in the most loving manner, even blessing her for the journey, as the young

pair would be absent for a night. At first the road lay downwards, along the river bank, then crossed the river and went uphill towards the circuit town of Buguruslan. Without halting here, our travellers crossed the bridge over the great Kinel, and then rolled gaily along the water-meadows. following the summer-track which lay through the high grass of the steppes; not stopping to alight at any of the scattered villages. The horses kept up a brisk trot, ten versts an hour. It was long since Alexei Stepanovitsch had visited this side of the Kinel, and the fragrant, verdant, flower-starred steppe enchanted him. Terrified bustards flew before the carriage every minute: while the crested snipes accompanied it, circling around, and then alighting on the ground some distance in advance, only to start up again when it drew near, while the air echoed with their sonorous cries. Alexei Stepanovitsch regretted not having brought his gun with him. This wondrous, teeming, thousand-tongued steppe—in those days rich in game of every variety-distracted his mind or, to speak more justly, absorbed his attention to such a degree that he listened to his wife's intellectual conversation without having the slightest notion of what she said, and for the most part without even hearing her. It did not take her long to discover her husband's absorption, and she was silent, then grew angry, then began to talk to Parascha who accompanied them. After crossing a flat table-land they arrived at Aksinia Stepanovna's little country house, at about twelve o'clock. This was much smaller than the Bagrovo house, and rather resembled a town-dwelling. It stood on the level banks of the Little Kinel, merely separated from the river by a kitchen garden, where for the moment a couple of sunflowers and the white peeled sticks supporting the rows of sugar-peas were the sole objects of interest. How well I remember this poor, solitary little dwelling, which I saw for the first time ten vears later, and can well imagine how it charmed Alexei Stepanovitsch and horrified his wife. There it stood in brightest sunlight, a barren desolate spot on the flat river bank, and all around the level steppe pierced by the holes of the bobacs1 no tree, no bush; a placid deep river, fringed with reeds and rushes. How should it find favour in

¹ The bobac is a species of marmot. [Tr. H. R.]

anyone's sight? Nothing here that was beautiful, splendid, or picturesque! And yet Alexei Stepanovitsch loved this place so dearly that he preferred it to Bagrovo. I cannot say I agree with him in this, but I too loved that quiet little house on the banks of the Kinel—the limpid ripple and waving masses of rushes in the stream, the wide extent of the green steppe, even the ferry boat, into which you could almost step from the house-door, and cross to the farther bank of the Kinel, where a still more desolate plain stretched towards the South losing itself in seemingly interminable distance.

The house-mistress, her two little boys, and her two-yearold baby daughter, together with Jelisaveta Stepanovna and the latter's husband, greeted their dear guests at the door. In spite of its poverty-stricken exterior this little country house was very pretty and neat indoors, far neater and prettier than Stepan Michailovitsch's house. Every corner of it bespoke the refinement of the "dear simpleton" as her sisters derisively called her, which, in spite of her widowhood and her voung children, produced the simple and peaceful home atmosphere peculiar to women of extreme delicacy of feeling. I have already told you that Aksinia Stepanovna was very good-hearted, and genuinely fond of her new sister-in-law. Small wonder then, that she was the kindest of hostesses towards her newly-married visitors. This partiality had been so evident at Bagrovo that Jelisaveta Stepanovna had been sent along with the culprit, in order that her (Jelisaveta's) intellectual and social superiority (she had married a General) should act as a curb on the too-affectionate zeal of the amiable Aksinia Stepanovna. But the latter good soul was not influenced by the crafty and malignant Madame General, and replied simply and briefly to the latter's insolent admonitions: "The rest of you may please yourselves, and may abuse and hate Sofia Nikolaievna if it suits you to do so, but I am quite satisfied with her conduct. I have only received good and kind treatment from her, and I am determined that she and my brother shall be made welcome in my house." Thus she spoke and thus acted, inspired by genuine affection and good feeling; she looked after the young bride with the greatest solicitude and entertained both her and her husband most hospitably. The haughty Jelisaveta assumed a much colder

and more distant attitude here than at Bagrovo, and her husband followed her lead. He, however, got so tipsy towards evening that he had to be locked up in the empty bath-house. Sofia Nikolaievna took not the slightest notice of the couple's rudeness, but was excessively amiable towards her hostess and the children. In the afternoon, after a short rest, they all went for a row on the Kinel, crossed to the other shore, and then returned home. After drinking tea almost at the water's edge, they proposed that the new sister-in-law should try her luck at fishing, but she hastily replied that she could not bear this sort of occupation and would far sooner chat with the sisters. Alexei Stepanovitsch on the contrary, who was delighted to note the good understanding between his eldest sister and his wife, gave himself up to his favourite sport with the utmost complacency, assisted by all the household There he sat, among the rushes, until and the two boys. supper-time, and caught numbers of the great bream which were once so plentiful in the placid Kinel. It had been arranged that they should start on the return journey at six o'clock the next morning, but the young pair decided to leave at a still earlier hour, in order not to keep Stepan Michailovitsch waiting for his dinner. The hostess, however, and her sister, the General's lady, were to leave towards evening, stopping at Buguruslan for the night, where the horses could be duly baited and rested, and arriving at Bagrovo the day after that. Sofia Nikolaievna felt somewhat piqued by her husband's behaviour. In spite of all her intuition, she failed to comprehend how it was possible for a man, loving her as he did, to be so fond of his horrid damp Bagrovo, with its dirty mill dam, foul pond, and rugged birch-wood; how he could be so completely absorbed by the dreary steppe and the stupid snipe; and whatever on earth could he find to attract him in that hateful fishing and those disgusting fish with their moist, offensive smell—that he could forget his wife for whole hours at a time? She could not understand it at all, and felt positively insulted when Alexei Stepanovitsch described his delight in nature and in field sports to her. occasion however she had the prudence to abstain from all discussion or criticism: the recollection of the scene on the island was too recent in her memory.

Alexei Stepanovitsch and Sofia Nikolaievna slept in state in Aksinia Stepanovna's own bed-chamber, which she resigned to them for this night; and which she had adorned to the best of her ability, without paying any attention to the sneers of her sister, the General's wife. The young pair took their leave—a good half hour before the appointed time next day. and started for home. Nothing worthy of note occurred on the return journey, unless it was that Alexei Stepanovitsch was not quite so wrapped up in the steppe and the snipes; that he didn't think it necessary to shout whenever a bustard started up before the coach: and that, as the result of this abstention he was somewhat more interested in his wife's conversation and looked at her more tenderly. They arrived at Bagrovo some time before they were expected. The servants were busy laying the table, and Alexandra Stepanovna had just uttered the remarkable prophecy: "To-day the little father will have to wait for his dinner. City folk can't keep up this early-rising business day after day." The old man understood the hint perfectly well, and replied cheerily: "Well, what of that? We can very well wait a bit for our dear guests." This speech had a petrifying effect on all present. Stepan Michailovitsch had never, in the whole course of his life. sat down to dinner later than twelve o'clock: nay, when his appetite was especially hearty, the meal was served even earlier, and the slightest hitch or delay would cause an outburst of wrath. "This is all that Sofia Nikolaievna's doing," whispered Alexandra Stepanovna to her mother and younger sister in the adjoining room." It's a pleasure to be kept waiting by her! But if ever you have happened to be a bit late for dinner when you have been coming back from Neklyudoyo, what sort of an uproar has been made for you, and all the rest of us, too!" She was still whispering away, when the coach dashed up to the balcony staircase, the wearied horses panting and sweating the old man kissed his daughter-in-law. and congratulated the young folks on their punctuality, and then roared: "Masan! Tanaitschenok! Bring in dinner!"

The day was spent in the usual way. After tea Stepan Michailovitsch, whose good-will towards his daughter-in-law seemed to increase every hour, enquired if she had ever seen a herd of horses, such as roamed the steppes, half wild and in

great numbers. On hearing that she had not seen but would much like to see such a herd, he had all his horses collected and driven into the courtvard. He then himself led his daughter-in-law into their midst, and pointed out all the finest mares to her with their sucking foals; the one and twoyear-old stallions; and the young geldings which during the summer were allowed out at pasture with the herd in the rich. nutritious steppe grass. He presented her with a pair of the most beautiful mares, and added that he hoped his daughterin-law would breed a fine stud of horses from them. Nikolaievna was delighted with the young foals, their capers, and their affection for their dams: and she thanked her father-in-law most heartily for his present. " And take great care, Spirka," added Stepan Michailovitsch to the head groom. "that the young mistress's mares are thoroughly well looked after; her two foals must be specially marked. You had better slit their ears a little deeper, and later we'll have them branded with her name. I only wish you had a fancy for horses, my little girl!" he added, turning to Sofia Nikolaievna: "Alexei takes no interest in them!" The old man had a veritable passion for horses, and in spite of his limited means had managed, through his own energy and exertion, to establish a considerable stud, and to breed a fine race of strong draught-horses, which was the envy of all the neighbouring connoisseurs and fanciers. He was enchanted with the interest which Sofia Nikolaievna took in his horses. It must be admitted she only did it to please him, but he believed it in all seriousness, and marched her into the stables to shew her the coach-horses being fed.

I fear I shall be wearying my reader with all these details of how the days were passed, and must briefly add that the next day—the fifth since the arrival of the bridal pair at Bagrovo—was spent in the same manner as the four preceding ones. By claim of seniority in age, the next visit of the young couple should have been to the Erlykins, but the estate of the latter was situated a hundred-and-seventy versts distant from Bagrovo, much nearer to Ufa, so it was arranged to visit them in the course of the return journey to the city. Add to this that Jelisaveta Stepanovna's spouse, the sullen and taciturn General Erlykin, after getting drunk at Nagatkino,

had indulged in one of his regular outbursts of drunkenness. which never lasted less than a week, and that his wife had been compelled to leave him in the care of friends at Buguruslan, under pretext of his being ill. Hence it came about that the next day was fixed for the visit to Alexandra Stepanovna, who left a day in advance for her estate of Karataievka accompanied by her Bashkir husband, first obtaining her father's permission to include her youngest and eldest sisters in the invitation. Thus Jelisaveta Stepanovna remained in possession at Bagrovo, ostensibly because her husband was supposed to be lying sick at Buguruslan, but in reality to watch the old people. The road to Karataievka, which was about the same distance from Bagrovo as Nagatkino-that is to say, rather over fifty versts—lay in a quite opposite direction -directly to the north For half of the way, the district was mountainous and wooded. The newly-married pair set out after an early breakfast, and the road being very bad and seldom used, they had only proceeded about half-way on their journey, when they were forced to come to a halt in the open country between Old and New Mertovschtschina, and wait a couple of hours to rest and feed the horses. It was tea-time when at last they arrived at Karataieyka. The residence of this lover of Bashkir customs was much more poverty-stricken in appearance than the little house at Nagatkino. At the first glance one was struck by the dismal, narrow little windows; the floors were all uneven, as if laid in steps, full of big holes gnawed by the rats, and so dirty that it would have been impossible ever to scrub them clean. Sofia Nikolaievna entered this uncomfortable and inhospitable dwelling with some trepidation and the utmost reluctance. Alexandra Stepanovna received her with the extremest insolence and quite surpassed herself with hints and taunts, somewhat after this fashion: "Welcome, dear guests, come indoors, and make the best of things! You, dear brother, will not criticise us, I know; but I fear that Sofia Nikolaievna will not like to put up with our poor cottage, after being accustomed to her father's grand palace in the city. We are only poor folks of the lowest rank, and must cut our coat according to our cloth. Salaries and revenues are not for the likes of us." Sofia Nikolaievna, without being in the least disconcerted.

replied that each one's manner of life depended more on his or her own tastes than on means: moreover it was none of her business how and where her husband's relatives chose to live. After supper, the young couple were installed in the so-called drawing room for their sleeping apartment, and no sooner were the lights extinguished than a most hideous clatter, rattling, and jumping-about began, and they were attacked with such boldness by a legion of rats, that poor Sofia Nikolaievna, between her terror and her disgust, had not a wink of sleep. Alexei Stepanovitsch was forced to relight the lamp, and armed with a bar used for propping the window open, he held the bed against the onsets of the obnoxious rodents, some of which had actually sprung on the quilt as soon as the light went out. Alexei Stepanovitsch experienced neither disgust nor fear: this was no new experience for him: and just at first he was highly amused at the comical leaps. spirited attacks, and wild squeaks of the enemy. Eventually he fell asleep, lying across the bed, still clutching his weapon: but Sofia Nikolaievna had constantly to rouse him, and it was only at dawn, when the foe had withdrawn to his subterranean camp, that the poor woman was able to sleep at all. She awoke with a racking headache: her hostess only laughed when she heard how the wretched rats had terrified Sofia Nikolaievna, and remarked that rats always disliked strangers, but treated the owners of a house with due respect. However, Aksinia Stepanovna and Tania could not observe their sister-in-law's wan and worn countenance without feeling compassion, and they both sympathised with her and took her part. Madame Nagatkina reproved her sister Alexandra for not having made the usual arrangements, that is to say, not having placed the bed in the middle of the room, with the curtains hung round so as to be easily tucked in under the mattress. To this Alexandra only replied with a malicious smile, and the remark: "It's a pity the rats didn't bite off our dear relative's nose!" "Take care," retorted Aksinia Stepanovna; "if our father gets to hear of this, it will be the worse for you!"

The village of Karataievka was scattered on a hill bordered by a little river which took its rise in a number of purling springs and brooks. At the far end of the village the stream

was enclosed by dykes and worked a little water-mill. The district in itself was far from ugly; but the proprietor and his manner of life were so utterly repulsive, that nothing in his neighbourhood could possibly be agreeable. Karataiev, in awe of Stepan Michailovitsch at Bagrovo, was terrified by his wife when at home. Many a time he longed to shew some kindness and civility to Sofia Nikolaievna, but dared not brave his wife's wrath. However he took advantage of the latter's occasional absence to beg permission to kiss his sister-in-law's hand, while making his usual remark that she was the most beautiful woman in the world. On requesting this favour a second time, it was refused.

Karatajev led a weird life. During the greater part of the summer he spent his days with the Bashkir tribes in their pasture lands, drinking koumis with them. He spoke their language like one of themselves, and would remain whole days in the saddle, never alighting even for a moment, so that his legs were as bowed as any Bashkir horseman's. He could shoot with a bow and arrow and could split an egg at an enormous distance. The rest of the year he dwelt in a room containing a stove, which communicated directly with the hall. There he would sit the whole day long, wrapped in furs staring through the open window, regardless of the biting cold. From time to time he would whistle a Bashkirian melody, and then refresh himself with a sup of stomach bitters or a drink of Bashkirian mead. Why Karataiev stared out of this window. which looked out on the desolate courtyard, crossed diagonally by a rough footpath—what he saw—what he kept under observation—what that head set on those athletic shoulders was thinking about—are secrets which no psychologist can unriddle. It is true that the meditations of the philosopher were sometimes interrupted—as when, for instance, some buxom wife or lass would cross the yard on her way from the kitchen to the stable. Then would Karataiev nod and wink to her, receiving similar nods and winks by way of answer. But the female form would vanish like a ghost round the corner, and he would resume his staring into the empty distance.

Sofia Nikolaievna could hardly wait for the moment of departure from this dismal den; and after an early breakfast,

eaten while the horses stood at the door, the newly-married pair took a hasty leave and set off. By way of farewell the hostess kissed her sister-in-law on each cheek and on the shoulder, and thanked her heartily for her kind visit, while the latter returned equally warm thanks for her hospitable reception.

No sooner was Sofia Nikolajevna seated with her husband in the coach than she gave way to her ill-humour. The goodhearted Aksinia Stepanovna, without any idea of making mischief, had let out to her that the hostess had deliberately neglected taking the necessary precautions against the rats. and the young bride, who had restrained her anger while in her enemy's house, now lost all control over herself. forgot that Parascha was seated in the carriage with them; she forgot that Alexandra Stepanovna was Alexei Stepanovitsch's sister, and was unsparing in her abuse and epithets. Alexei Stepanovitsch, with his straightforward disposition and kind heart, could not believe it possible that his sister had been guilty of such malice, and attributed the neglect entirely to oversight on her part; he was seriously annoyed by Sofia Nikolaievna's furious attack, which, to tell the truth, was not entirely justified. For the first time the young man grew angry with his wife, told her that she ought to be ashamed of herself to speak in such a manner, turned his back on her, and kept silence. In this frame of mind they arrived at Old Mertovschtschina, where just then old Maria Michailovna Mertvaia¹ resided, whose daughter Katerina Borisovna (a great friend of Sofia Nikolaievna) had quite recently married P. J. Tschitschagov, who had been banished to Ufa where his first wife had died. Katerina and her husband had just arrived on a visit to the former's mother, and the meeting between her and the young Bagrovs was quite unexpected. Sofia Nikolaievna, who was not less attached to Tschitschagov than to his wife, was so agreeably surprised by this rencontre, that her ill-humour all vanished, and she was quite gay and excited. Alexei Stepanovitsch, on the contrary, remained so sad and silent than no one could fail to remark it.

¹ In later years her sons obtained the permission of the authorities to adopt the surname of Mertvago.

Tschitschagov's history is a romance in itself, which I will try to relate as briefly as possible. I do this, because we shall meet with this family later in the course of our story, and their influence on the fate of the younger Bagrov was not inconsiderable. P. J. Tschitschagov was an exceedingly clever or more strictly speaking, quick-witted man, who had received what in those days was considered a most liberal education. He spoke several languages, was a good draughtsman and architect, and wrote both in prose and poetry. In his passionate youth he had fallen in love, while in Moscow, with a Mademoiselle Rimsko-Korsakova, and in order to gain her hand, had committed an unpardonable fraud, which was only discovered after the marriage had taken place, and in consequence of which he was banished to Ufa. His wife died soon afterwards; and, at the end of a year, he was so far consoled as to fall in love with Katerina Borisovna. who fell a victim to his merry wit, amiable disposition, and cultured mind. At any rate, she cannot have been fascinated by his personal appearance, for he was hopelessly plainlooking. Katerina Borisovna was a mature girl of strong character. Her mother and brothers could not get on very well with her, and gave her to Tschitschagov to wife. Eventually he was pardoned, but was not permitted to leave Ufa. Sofia Nikolaievna cherished a two-fold affection for this man. first as the dearly-loved husband of her friend, secondly and principally, as an intellectual and cultured companion. Old Maria Michailovna had made up her mind to end her days in the country, and Tschitschagov and his wife had come to assist her with the building of her house and a church. Sofia Nikolaievna, who had already spent a whole week with her husband's relations, was as delighted with the Tschitschagovs' company as if she had received a Christmas present. Once more she breathed freely, her sprightly spirit was refreshed. and she laughed and chatted gaily until nearly midnight. Alexei Stepanovitsch might have sat the whole evening in silent isolation, if the considerate old mistress of the house had not taken him in hand and encouraged him to talk by dint of skilful questioning. As it was, as soon as supper was over, he wished them all Good-Night, and went off to the hastily-prepared guest chamber. Sofia Nikolaievna found

him fast asleep, and the next day they left at a very early hour for Bagrovo, without rousing the family from their slumbers.

On the way home Alexei Stepanovitsch continued sulky and silent. To Sofia Nikolaievna's direct questions he only replied in monosyllables and in the coldest tones: and after awhile she grew silent too. This was a great trial to one of her impatient and irritable disposition, but she had made up her mind to have no more disputes in Parascha's hearing and postponed all discussion until the hour for the after-dinner siesta, when she expected to be alone with her husband. She began chatting with Parascha about the old days in Ufa, while Alexei Stepanovitsch squeezed himself into a corner of the coach, and either slept or pretended to sleep. reached Bagrovo two hours before dinner time. Michailovitsch was visibly delighted to have his daughterin-law home again, and told her he had felt very lonely without her. "No," he went on, "it would never do for you to remain here much longer: for I should grow so fond of you. my little daughter-in-law, that in the end I should always be longing for you." He made Sofia Nikolaievna give him a full account of the round of visits. He knew Maria Michailovna, of whom he spoke with great respect, remarking that he would send word to her next day, inviting her, her daughter and son-in-law to take bread and salt1 with the newlywedded pair, and to extend their visit for four days including the Sunday. "The day after to-morrow you must go and see the Kalpinskis and Lupenevskis, and invite them too for Sunday. After Sunday you must stay another three days here, and then return home, and God be with you. Gossip Nikolai Feodorovitsch has never been parted from vou before," he went on, turning to Sofia Nikolaievna, "and will be longing for you, and you for him-poor, suffering invalid!"

Stepan Michailovitsch very soon guessed that something unpleasant had occurred during the journey. In the course of the conversation he asked his son and daughter-in-law how they had been received at Karataievka. Naturally he was told that they had had a most hospitable reception. Sofia

¹ Symbols of hospitality, an expression which is understood to be an invitation to dine, [Tr. S. R.]

Nikolaievna however mentioned among other matters that she had not slept at all during the night because of the rats. Stepan Michailovitsch expressed great astonishment at this. He had only visited Karataievka once, and that was some time ago, but he had noticed nothing of the sort then. "Oh. ves, it's quite true, Stepan Michailovitsch," interrupted Arina Vasilievna innocently. In vain did Jelisaveta Stepanovna wink and grimace, the old lady never noticed her, for which blunder she got finely scolded by her daughters later. "There are such dreadful rats there," she went on, "that you can't sleep without bed curtains." "And you were put to sleep without curtains?" asked the old man in an altered and ominous tone. They were compelled to reply that this was the case. "A hospitable hostess!" said he, and gave his wife and his daughter, the General's wife, such a look that they felt cold all over.

Karataiev, Madame Nagatkina, and Tania had not yet arrived, but were expected by tea-time. Dinner was not a All were nervous, and not without good cheerful meal. reason. Arina Vasilievna and Jelisaveta Stepanovna felt the storm approaching, and dreaded the bolt that would inevitably descend upon them. For a long time past Stepan Michailovitsch had had no outburst of fury, and they feared his rage all the more from being less accustomed to it. Sofia Nikolaievna noticed that her father-in-law was in a very bad temper. It would have been only right if he had given his daughter-her own avowed enemy-a severe reproof; but she was afraid that some evil consequences would fall upon She had mentioned the rats quite inadvertently. without ever dreaming that her father-in-law would attach so much importance to the circumstance. Besides this, she had another anxiety weighing down her heart, she did not know how to conciliate her husband, who for the first time in his life had been angry with her for her abuse of Alexandra Stepanovna. Should she wait for him to make the first step towards a reconciliation, or should she herself make the advance in order to bring the present painful situation to an end, begging his forgiveness and obliterating all recollection of her passion and temper with kisses and caresses? Most certainly she would have chosen the latter plan, for she loved

her good, gentle, affectionate husband most truly and tenderly. She reproached herself bitterly. She might have foreseen all that would happen. Well she knew that while Alexei Stepanovitsch had been ready to lay down his life for her sake, still it was useless to expect him to comprehend and realise her mortification over the various petty annovances of daily life. And what should she do to quell her own hot blood, her excitable finely-strung nerves, her lively imagination, and the incurable sensitiveness of her disposition? These thoughts distracted the poor girl, walking to and fro in her chamber whither she had escaped after dinner, where she awaited her husband, who had been waylaid by his mother and called into her room. The moments passed like hours to Sofia. The thought that Alexei Stepanovitsch was intentionally keeping out of her way, in order to avoid any farther discussion with her—the thought that she might probably have to meet him in the presence of his relations, without having been reconciled to him or having relieved her aching heart of its heavy burden—the prospect of having to keep up an appearance of gaiety and composure during the whole evening—these thoughts pressed upon her and threw her into a fever of anxiety. Suddenly the door opened, and Alexei Stepanovitsch entered the room-no longer timid and depressed, but resolute and even forbidding-and began to reproach his wife for having complained about his sister, Alexandra Stepanovna, to his father. "They are all trembling and weeping now, and God knows what is going to happen," he exclaimed, primed by the hints and suggestions of his mother and Jelisaveta Stepanovna. "It is mean and disgraceful to bring nothing but quarrelling and dissension into your husband's family. I told you my father had an ungovernable temper when roused, and, although you knew that, you took advantage of his fancy for you to . . ." Here Sofia Nikolaievna lost all patience. The blood rushed to her head; her better feelings, together with all consciousness of guilt or sentiments of remorse, vanished; and the unfortunate bridegroom realised that Stepan Michailovitsch was not the only person who could fly into a passion. A breathless torrent of complaints, reproaches, and accusations descended upon him; and Alexei Stepanovitsch was attacked, annihilated,

proved inexcusably guilty of everything, and well night convinced that he must be an utter scoundrel . . . and there she was—lying at his feet, dissolved in tears, and entreating his pardon! Many a braver man than Alexei Stepanovitsch might well have quailed before such a fiery onslaught of mind, heart, conviction, and marvellous gift of speech! And many a justly-angered man, of far stronger character than Alexei Stepanovitsch, at such a moment would have freely admitted himself in the wrong to such a young, charming, and beloved wife. And Alexei Stepanovitsch was decidedly in the wrong.

The storm in the newly-married pair's room was lulled: but at the other side of the house it was just breaking in Stepan Michailovitsch's chamber. The old gentleman awoke. His slumbers had not calmed his temper, nor banished the frown from his lowering brow. For a short while he remained sitting gloomily on his bed, and then shouted: "Masan!" Masan had been stationed outside the door for long enough. peeping through a crack. He had been placed there as a sentry by the family, who were gathered together in a state of the greatest perturbation in the hall. Masan, bawling: "What's your will?" burst noisily into the room. "Is Alexandra Stepanovna there?" "She has deigned to be present." "Call her here!" The next instant Alexandra Stepanovna entered the room, as an instant's hesitation at these times might have most serious consequences. "So you provided rats for the entertainment of your brother and his wife, my lady?" began Stepan Michailovitsch in his wellknown ominous voice. "Forgive me, father!" faltered Alexandra Stepanovna, whose knees trembled and whose natural malice had given way to terror. "I had my drawing room prepared for my visitors, and quite forgot to provide bed-curtains. It was purely joy and excitement which caused me to forget them." "Pure joy, indeed! As if I didn't know what you are! How dare you offer me and your brother such an affront? How dare you disgrace your father in his old age?"

Probably the matter might have rested here and have passed off with a certain amount of scolding and abuse—with perhaps a couple of cuffs thrown in by way of conclusion—but

Alexandra Stepanovna could not endure the thought that she owed this humiliation to Sofia Nikolaievna. Believing the storm had passed harmlessly away and quite forgetting that in a case of this sort any retort would only make matters worse, she grumbled: "So I am to be treated in this unjust way, just to please her!" On this a fresh and still more violent fit of anger seized Stepan Michailovitsch (whose rage, when it took possession of him, never failed to produce some disgraceful scene). Scarcely, however, had a frightful epithet escaped his lips, when Arina Vasilievna, the widow Nagatkina. and Tania rushed into the room from their ambush behind the door, and flung themselves at the old man's feet, uttering loud cries for mercy. Karataiev, who had been listening behind the door with the ladies, dashed away into the birch grove, where he struck about him right and left like a madman, breaking down the harmless twigs with his stick to relieve his helpless rage at this treatment of his wife. Jelisaveta Stepanovna had not ventured to put in an appearance, as her conscience was far from clear in the matter and she knew that her father guessed as much. "Little father Stepan Michailovitsch!" wailed Arina Vasilievna, "your will is law here: do as you please, for we are all in your power; but save our honour and do not disgrace your family in the eves of your daughter-in-law; she has only just arrived and you will frighten her to death!" Evidently these words brought the old man back to his senses. He was silent awhile—then kicked Alexandra Stepanovna from him, and shouted: "Out with you!" No one waited for farther orders: in a trice the room was empty, and all was silent around Stepan Michailovitsch, whose blue eyes remained gloomy and troubled for a long while, whose breast heaved convulsively, and whose breath came with difficulty. For he had restrained himself, and his furious passion was far from being exhausted.

The samovar had been hissing and bubbling for quite a long time on the drawing-room table, for tea was not to be served in the gallery as the weather was cold and damp. It had only just ceased raining, and it would seem as if Nature sympathised with the stormy atmosphere of the Bagrovo household, for since dinner-time two thunder-clouds had gathered in the sky, each blacker than the other. Lightning

flashed, and the hollow firmament shook with the rumbling of the thunder. But finally the storm dissolved in a shower of rain, the clouds rolled off towards the East, and the dazzling sun appeared in the West in full splendour. Forest and field were fresher and more fragrant, birds sang more lustily and joyfully. Different—how different are the traces of the storms of human passion!...

Arina Vasilievna and her daughters, with the exception of Alexandra Stepanovna-whose absence was accounted for on the plea of illness-her son-in-law Karataiev (Erlykin was still at Buguruslan) all gathered together in the drawingroom. Stepan Michailovitsch gave orders that his tea was to be served in his own room, and refused admittance to all. The door of the young couple's bed-chamber was still closed. and at last it was decided to summon them to tea. They appeared at once, and although Sofia Nikolaievna looked more cheerful and Alexei Stepanovitsch was actually more cheerful than before, it was not difficult to guess from their faces that something unusual had taken place between them. So far, they had heard nothing of the scene in Stepan Michailovitsch's room. Whatever had happened to Arina Vasilievna and her daughters, it is certain that they presented the appearance of folks who had just been rescued from flood or fire—or both. It is a pity that no one was present to observe the interesting expressions of the various countenances and the assumed composure of the assembled company. Conversation was constrained and languid. The absence of Stepan Michailovitsch and Alexandra Stepanovna was so very suspicious that Sofia Nikolaievna seized the earliest opportunity of retiring to her own room, where she summoned Parascha, and the mystery was solved. Everyone knew about the affair in the maidservants' hall. In the first place Masan and Tanaitschenok had overheard the whole of the uproar: and in the second place the old lady and Mademoiselle Tania were accustomed to confide everything to their maids. Hence it happened that Parascha was able to give her mistress a full and circumstantial account of the frightful scene Nikolaievna was terribly upset. She had never dreamt of such dire consequences arising, and blamed herself anew for having mentioned the unlucky rats to her father-in-law:

while she felt the utmost compassion for Alexandra Stepanovna. She returned to the salon, and asked her mother-in-law's permission to go and see the sick daughter: she was informed. however, that Alexandra Stepanovna was asleep. Sofia Nikolaievna was in her room with Parascha, Alexei Stepanovitsch had heard the whole story from his mother and sisters. At nine o'clock supper was hastily eaten, and immediately afterwards everyone went to bed. No sooner was Sofia Nikolaievna alone with her husband than she flung herself, weeping, on his shoulder, and again entreated his forgiveness with the deepest contrition; taking, indeed, more blame upon herself than was her just due. Alexei Stepanovitsch was unable to appreciate the exquisite source of this sincere regret and heartfelt compunction. He was only distressed that she should be so unduly pained; and tired himself out with his efforts to console her telling her that. thanks to God, all had ended well; that they were only too well accustomed to this sort of thing at home; that tomorrow his father would wake up quite good-tempered, forgive Alexandra Stepanovna, and everything would go along better than before. He begged Sofia Nikolaievna not to be drawn into any discussion with the family, and not to carry out her intention to ask pardon for her unpremeditated blunder, and advised her in future not to pay early-morning visits to his father, but to wait until the old man sent for her himself. Sofia Nikolaievna realised more clearly than ever before exactly what type of man she had married—her dreary forebodings for the future were only too well fulfilled. Her husband slept peacefully, as was his wont; she lay awake the whole night through.

His attack of rage had greatly shaken old Stepan Michail-ovitsch; he was ashamed of his savage behaviour, when he reflected that his daughter-in-law might possibly get to hear of it. But all base and malicious tricks were utterly detestable to his honest and upright mind; and his daughter's behaviour had appeared in the light of an act of defiance against his fatherly authority. He ate no supper, never took his usual seat on the balcony, even declined to see his steward, sending the latter his orders by a servant. But the soothing hours of darkness, wherein our better instincts are aroused, and

finally Sleep-that bringer of Peace and consoler of the Spiritproduced their much-desired effect. Next morning Stepan Michailovitsch had Arina Vasilievna summoned to his presence at a very early hour, and ordered her to communicate the following instructions to her daughters, which evidently were intended specially for Alexandra Stepanovna, and in part for Jelisaveta Stepanovna. No one was to appear in the least upset or disturbed, nor to act in any way that might lead the daughter-in-law to suspect that anything was amiss. Shortly after this the samovar was brought out, and the whole family summoned. By the greatest good fortune Arina Vasilievna had already found time to send a message to her daughter-inlaw by Alexei Stepanovitsch, entreating her to do her best to cheer up the old gentleman, who, so she said, was not very well that morning and rather low-spirited. The daughter-inlaw, although she had not slept a wink during the night, and was not especially cheerful herself, exerted herself to the utmost to fulfil this request of her mother-in-law, which was not only the old lady's, but the whole family's and, in particular, her own desire.

Sofia Nikolaievna had a marvellous personality! Her sprightly, susceptible, easily excited nature was so swayed by the swiftest variation of thought or sentiment, that, in an instant, she could transform her whole being to suit her mood. In consequence of this peculiar versatility she was frequently suspected of dissimulation—which suspicion was a great error and an injustice to her. Rather was it a special gift of sympathetic insight, which enabled her to transport herself into any sphere and situation whatever-to abandon herself unreservedly to a new idea or a fresh desire—and to be irresistibly carried away on the wings of her own ardent fancy. And now the wish and desire to calm the agitation of this poor old man, whom she loved so dearly, who had taken her part, who had flown into a passion on her account, and whose health had suffered in consequence—combined with the wish to comfort her husband and the rest of the family, who were suffering from the effects of her thoughtlessness-took such utter and exclusive possession of her entire being, that she seemed as if transformed into someone almost supernatural. Soon everything and everyone was subject to her spell. She poured out

the tea herself, and even handed round the cups, first serving her father-in-law, next her mother-in-law, and the rest of the party in due order. She talked and chatted with everyone, and was so unconstrained, so amiable, and so cheery, that her father-in-law was quite satisfied that she had heard nothing of yesterday's uproar, and grew more cheerful himself. His good spirits were highly infectious, so much so indeed that by the end of an hour every trace of the miserable affair had vanished.

Directly after dinner the bridal pair sallied forth on a fresh round of visits, this time wending their way towards Neklyudovo to the Kalpinskis; and to Lupenevka (two versts beyond Neklyudovo) to our old acquaintance. Flena Ivanovna Lupenevskaia. Ilarion Nikolaievitsch Kalpinski and his wife, Katerina Ivanovna, dwelt at Neklyudovo. The former was. in his way, a somewhat remarkable man; without any scientific training it is true, but intellectual and well-read; who, in spite of his humble origin (it was said he was a Mordvin by birth) had risen by his own efforts to the rank of Privy Councillor, and had prudently bettered his position by marrying the daughter of a land-owner of the ancient nobility. He had quite recently devoted himself to agriculture, and was making money very fast. Kalpinski claimed to be a free thinker and philosopher; and having heard of such a person as Voltaire, called himself a Voltairean. He led an isolated and solitary life apart from his family, and devoted himself solely to his own pursuits and interests. Sofia Nikolaievna had heard of him before, but had never met him, as he had formerly resided in Petersburg, and had only quite recently come to Orenburg. She was very much astonished to meet an intelligent and, for those times, cultured man, arrayed in fashionable and well-cut city clothes. Just at first she was agreeably surprised: but later, noting the godlessness and cynicism with which this man strove to exhibit the worse side of his moral life before the fashionable beauty, she contracted a great dislike for him, which she never quite overcame. His wife, so far as the laws of honour and morality were concerned, was in no way different from her sister Lupenevskaia, though a much cleverer woman. After spending an hour with the Kalpinskis, the young pair proceeded to Madame Lupenevskaia's and spent another hour in her company. At each house they were offered

tea and preserved fruit, spiced with conversation which was exceedingly offensive to Sofia Nikolaievna. Both families were invited to dine at Bagrovo on the following Sunday. And here an unaccountable phenomenon of psychological character must be recorded—to wit that Flena Ivanovna felt herself irresistibly attracted towards Sofia Nikolaievna, and to such an extent indeed, that when the latter took her leave, the old lady overwhelmed her with such a torrent of exaggerated endearments and compliments that her guest was forced to blush and laugh at the same time. The young pair reached home an hour before supper time, and thereseated upon the familiar old balcony—was Stepan Michailovitsch, who received them with great pleasure. He was vastly entertained by the account of Flena Ivanovna's sudden affection for his daughter-in-law, and how she had kissed and caressed the latter, greeting her as a kindred soul and her "best-beloved cousin." When supper was finished, the whole family gathered together, according to their custom, on the balcony, and talked long and confidentially in the evening's cool, beneath the starlit canopy of heaven, which still shimmered with the reflection of the dying after-glow of sunset—so especially dear to Stepan Michailovitsch, although the old man could not have told you why.

The two days still remaining before Sunday passed without any event worthy of recording. Erlykin returned from Buguruslan vellow and depressed, as was the case after his fits of drunkenness. Stepan Michailovitsch was quite aware of this unfortunate failing or disease of his son-in-law, and undertook to cure him himself with doses of some particularly nauseous medicated wine, but without any visibly good results. When sober, Erlykin felt a positive disgust for all spirituous liquor, and could hardly raise a glass of wine to his lips without a shudder. But about four times a year a species of periodic passion for intoxicating drink seized him: if it were refused him he fell into a condition of absolute depression and misery; kept up a perpetual maundering, scolded and wept, threw himself at folk's feet, begging for a taste of wine; should this still be refused, he flew into a rage, rayed and blustered, and even tried to commit murder. Sofia Nikolaievna had heard all about him, and felt exceedingly sorry for

her poor brother-in-law. She treated him with the greatest friendliness, and tried to engage him in cheerful conversation, but all in vain. The haughty, gloomy, and sullen General persisted in his obstinate silence. Jelisaveta Stepanovna, far from feeling grateful, considered herself insulted by her sister-in-law's attentions to her husband; and very pointedly gave the latter to understand this. Observing which, Stepan Michailovitsch gave his gifted daughter such a severe rebuke, that in future she forebore from sneering at her sister-in-law.

Twice did Stepan Michailovitsch escort Sofia Nikolaievna through the winter-and-summer-sown wheat fields towards the enclosed forest lands and his beloved mountain springs. The old man fondly imagined that his darling daughter-in-law was interested in and pleased with all around her: but she detested everything. Only one thought sustained Sofia Nikolaievna's endurance, the desire to quit Bagrovo as soon as possible and never to set eyes on it again. Had anyone told her then that she would spend nearly the whole of her future life there, and die there too, she could not have believed the prophecy, and would have declared that she preferred death to such a fate. Thus man deems himself unable to bear an unaccustomed load, little guessing that God Himself will place that burden on his shoulders hereafter!

Sunday arrived. The guests assembled. Maria Michailovna arrived from Old Mertovschtschina; from Lupenevha and from Neklyudovo came the Lupenevskis and Kalpinskis; and two old bachelors, the magistrate and chief of police, came from Buguruslan. In addition to these guests, an old neighbour, a little, meagre, talkative being of the name of Afrosinia Andreievna (I forget her surname, for no one ever addressed her by it) arrived on the scene from her estate. She was a matchless liar, and her wondrous inventions used to afford Stepan Michailovitsch the same entertainment that adults sometimes find in fairy tales.

But it was worth while to make Afrosinia Andreievna's acquaintance, if only for a short time. She had once spent ten years in Petersburg during the hearing of a law suit, which was eventually decided in her favour, and ever since had resided on her own little property. She had brought home such a marvellous string of adventures which had

happened to her while in Petersburg that Stepan Michailovitsch used nearly to die of laughing when she solemnly recounted them. Amongst other things she used to vow that she had been on the most intimate footing with the Empress Katerina Alexeievna; adding, by way of explanation, that when folks lived together for ten years in the same city, it was but natural that they should get acquainted with one another. "I was in church on one occasion," remarked this gifted liar; " mass had just come to an end, when the Empress stepped to my side: I curtsied low, and ventured to congratulate her in the name of her patron saint, but Her Majesty was pleased to reply: 'Good-day, Afrosinia Andreievna! How are you getting on with your law suit? Why do you never bring your knitting along, and come and sit with me of an evening? We could have a nice little chat together.' After that, I visited her every evening. The Court servants got to know me quite well; and everyone in the palace knew me, and liked me too. Whenever anyone of the household was sent into the city to make purchases, they used to come and see me and tell me all the Court news. Naturally, I always had a little glass of brandy ready for these occasions. One fine day, towards evening, I was sitting at the window; suddenly a Court lackey galloped past, all dressed in red, embroidered with the Imperial arms; after a while a second rode past, and then a third. Then I couldn't contain myself any longer, but opened the window, and called: 'Filip Petrovitsch! Filip Petrovitsch! Where are you off to in such a hurry that you can't stop to see me?' 'No time for that, little mother,' replied the lackey: 'it's a cursed nuisance; but we have no lights in the palace, and we shall soon be wanting them!' 'Stop!' I screamed, 'I have five pounds of candles in stock, and you are welcome to them!' How pleased my Filip Petrovitsch was! I carried those candles out to him myself, and did him that service. Oh, yes, Stepan Michailovitsch, that was how I managed matters. It was only natural that folks should be fond of me!"

Stepan Michailovitsch, among his many peculiarities, took an especial pleasure in listening to the harmless lies of good-natured folk. Although a sworn foe to all calculated deceit, and even to the least deviation from the truth,

nevertheless he was always highly amused at the marvellous flights of fancy of innocent beings like Afrosinia Andreievna, whose too vivid imagination ran away with them to such an extent that they really believed all they said was true. He loved to talk to Afrosinia Andreievna, and not only in company either; but when he was in a good humour he enjoyed a tête-à-tête with her, and would listen for hours while she entertained him with the greatest eloquence with stories of her ten-years' residence in Petersburg, all more or less in the style of the foregoing specimen.

But let us return to our party of guests at Bagroyo. What a coat was that worn by the magistrate—what a uniform that of the chief of police! And there, between that couple of scarecrows in female array—that's to say between his wifeand her sister—behold Kalpinski in a French embroidered coat of dandified cut, two watchchains displayed on his waistcoat, countless rings glittering on his fingers, and glorious in silk stockings and gold-buckled shoes! Even Stepan Michailovitsch had thought it necessary to make something of a toilette, and the whole family had arrayed themselves in their very best. The witty, sarcastic Tschitschagov could hardly conceal his amusement at the varied selection of costumes. especially that of his friend, Kalpinski, He was able to give free rein to his tongue, as his wife and Sofia Nikolaievna, to whom he whispered all his comments, were seated together somewhat apart from the others. Sofia Nikolaievna only restrained her laughter with great difficulty: she tried not tolisten to what he said, and begged him earnestly either to be silent or to address himself to the worthy Stepan Michailovitsch. He did as she bade him, and soon grew to regard the old man with great respect and affection, which was reciprocated. The master of the house, on the contrary, could not endure-Monsieur Kalpinski, first, because he was a parvenu, and secondly because he was a drunkard and an unbeliever.

You may well imagine what a noble feast had been prepared. On this occasion Stepan Michailovitsch denied himself his favourite dishes, sausages made from pigs' chitterlings, and roast chine of pork with green groats. A skilful cook had been procured from some place or other, and the materials from which the various dishes were concocted left nothing to-

be desired. A choice six-weeks' calf, a pig fattened to the verge of monstrosity, poultry of every description, and fat mutton—everything was provided in the greatest profusion in honour of the great day. The table literally groaned under the weight of dishes; and room could not be found for some of these, it being the fashion of those days to place everything on the table at once. The banquet opened with cold viands: ham and smoked pork with garlic: then came the hot dishes: green cabbage soup and cray fish soup, accompanied by various wheaten pastes: next came an iced beetroot soup, followed by freshly-salted sturgeon and a whole pyramid of shelled crawfish tails. Of entrées there were but two: marinaded quails with cabbage; and stuffed ducklings, served with a sauce composed of plums, peaches, and apricots. The entrées were a concession to fashion. Stepan Michailovitsch utterly despised them and described them as "muck." A colossal turkey next made its appearance, flanked by a fillet of veal garnished with salted melons, marinaded pippins, and salted mushrooms preserved in vinegar. The meal concluded with a variety of sweet pastry and an apple cake served with thick cream. The accompanying beverages were fruit liqueurs, home-brewed March beer, iced kyass, and foaming mead. The guests ate steadily through the menu, without missing a single dish, and the heroic stomachs of our grandparents were fully equal to the mighty task! They ate slowly and seriously, and dinner was a long affair. Add to the multitude and solidity of the dishes the fact that none of the servants neither those of the house nor those brought by the guests-had the slightest notion of how to wait at table, and were continually colliding with each other, whereby the ladies' gowns ran considerable risk of being besprinkled with sauce and gravy.

Nevertheless the meal was a very pleasant affair: on the host's right hand Maria Michailovna was seated, and on his left, Tschitschagov, (whom Stepan Michailovitsch liked better and better as time went on), and who in himself was able to enliven the dreariest company. Next to Maria Michailovna came the bridal pair; and Sofia Nikolaievna's friend, Katerina Borisovna sat on her right. Kalpinski placed himself beside Katerina Borisovna, and paid assiduous court to both young

ladies during the feast; and also found time now and again to exchange a jest with Alexei Stepanovitsch, besides devouring a double portion of everything on the table, to compensate for the strict fast that he voluntarily imposed upon himself at home, out of pure avarice. Tschitschagov's neighbour was Erlykin, who, alone of the whole company, ate but sparingly, drank nothing but cold water, and remained sunk in the gloomiest and most profound meditation. Around the hostess were grouped her daughters, nieces, and the rest of the guests. After dinner all adjourned to the drawing room. where a couple of tables were set out with all manner of dainties. On one of these tables stood a circular confectionery service, made of Chinese porcelain and set on a base of gilded and painted bronze. The service consisted of a number of oblong compartments, each provided with a china lid, and containing severally, preserved raspberries, strawberries. cherries, red white and black currants, and the like. In the centre was a raised china dish, filled with conserve of rose leaves. This comfit service, which in those days was a costly novelty, was a gift from old Subin to Stepan Michailovitsch. The other table was covered with little plates filled with dried plums, peaches, dates, figs, walnuts, shell almonds, pistachio nuts, cedar nuts, and so forth. Stepan Michailovitsch was so lively after dinner that he would not hear of taking his usual nap. It was obvious to everyone present that he regarded his daughter-in-law with the utmost affection and devotion, and wished to make it plain that he did so; while she, for her part, sincerely loved and respected him. All during dinner he was constantly turning towards her, and asking her to perform all sorts of little services for him, to reach him this or hand him that, or to cut him a slice of meat just as she liked it herself. "I and my little daughter-in-law have the same taste in everything," he declared. Then he would ask her to repeat what he had said to her the day before; and to tell the company what she had said to him on this or that occasion -as he had quite forgotten what it was. It was the same after dinner. She must arrange this or bring that; and all these trifling behests, coupled with his devotion and his affectionate words—which were uttered with such homely simplicity and clumsy eloquence—left no doubt in his hearers'

minds as to the old man's infatuation for his daughter in-law. It is not necessary to relate with what grateful affection Sofia Nikolaievna responded to the slightest-to many present quite unnoticed—utterances in which the partiality of her rugged old father-in-law found expression. In a sudden fit of caprice Stepan Michailovitsch turned towards Madame Lupenevskaia, and enquired bluntly: "Well, Flena Ivanovna, what do you think of my daughter-in-law?" Flena Ivanovna. whose enthusiasm had been raised to the highest pitch by her generous potations of beer and kindred liquors, began protesting, and swore by the Cross that, from the first moment of setting eyes on Sofia Nikolaievna, she had loved the latter better than her own daughter, Lisanka, and that Cousin Alexei Stepanovitsch was indeed the happiest of mankind. "So you can lie to this tune too," said Stepan Michailovitsch in a meaning tone: "take care that you don't fall into the old tune again!" Here he was interrupted by Sofia Nikolaievna (who had no desire to have this sort of conversation carried on any farther) who now entreated him to go and rest if only for a little while, to which he readily consented. His daughter-in-law escorted him to his chamber, where she arranged the curtains round his bed with her own hands, and then hastened back to the guests, to carry out the old man's request that they should be hospitably entertained. Some of them likewise retired to rest; while the others had repaired to the island, and were now reposing in the shade beside the clear stream. Sofia Nikolaievna recalled her ungovernable outbreak of rage in this very spot some days before, and recollected the bitter words which had so saddened and cast down her husband, and her heart smote her. Although Alexei Stepanovitsch was just then in the highest spirits, laughing outrageously at one of Kalpinski's questionable stories, she could not resist the impulse to draw him aside; and while embracing him, with her eyes swimming in tears, to murmur: "Forgive me. my dearest husband, and forget for ever all that happened here on the day of our arrival!" Alexei Stepanovitsch, who was very much put out at the sight of her tears, returned her embrace, and kissed his wife's hands, adding cheerily: "Do not distress yourself over such a trifle, my little heart!" and then rushed back to Kalpinski in order not to miss the end of

the interesting anecdote. To speak truly, Sofia Nikolaievna had no ground for dissatisfaction. Nevertheless she remained sad and thoughtful awhile.

But soon the old gentleman awoke, and the whole party were summoned to tea. Before the balcony, in the wide shadow of the house, the samovar was already humming. Tables, easy chairs, and all sorts of seats were awaiting the guests. The bride poured out the tea, while splendid, thick scalded cream, baked until its surface was quite brown, and the most excellent cakes and pastry were handed round, all of which found a resting place in the visitors' stomachs. After tea the Kalpinskis and Lupenevskis went home, as they only lived fifteen versts away and there was no accommodation where they could spend the night at Bagrovo. The guests from Buguruslan took their leave at the same time.

Early the next day Maria Michailovna and the Tschitschagovs took their departure; and after dinner the Erlykins set off to make the necessary preparations for receiving the newly-wedded pair on their return journey to Ufa. evening of that same day Stepan Michailovitsch informed the remaining guests, with scant ceremony, that it was time for them to be thinking of going, as he wished to spend the last days of his son's and daughter-in-law's visit solely in their society. Naturally, the visitors lost no time in departing the Alexandra Stepanovna bade her sister-in-law farewell as amiably as she could, and Sofia Nikolaievna took leave of her with unaffected jov. It really seemed as if her father-in-law had divined her secret wish to spend a couple of days quite alone with him, without his daughters' company. How she blessed the sharp-sighted old fellow! She parted from her sister-in-law, Aksinia Stepanovna, with feelings of the warmest gratitude and sincerest regard. The old man did not fail to notice this. Her mother-in-law and Tania did not irk her in the least; first, because they were kindly by nature and moreover felt no hostility towards their new relative; and secondly, because they had the praiseworthy habit of taking themselves off, when they observed that their company was not wanted.

The young couple remained three days longer in Bagrovo—a period of tranquillity, free from the wearisome supervision

of hostile witnesses and from hypocritical pretence of friendship and venomous hints. Sofia Nikolaievna's sensitive nerves were relieved, and she was able to make a calmer survey of the peculiar sphere which she was henceforth fated to occupy, and to comprehend and value it at its true worth. She was also enabled to make a juster and more forbearing estimate of the characters of her mother-in-law and Tania, who were both possessed of qualities as yet quite unknown to her, and to observe her father-in-law with much circumspection. She observed and understood the environment in which her husband's vouth had been spent with the utmost clearness, realising how impossible it was that he should have developed into anything different than what he actually was; and she could not fail to realise farther that she would have to be prepared for eternal mutual misunderstanding, even perhaps in questions of conscience. But this last was but a fugitive thought, and once again her earlier and delicious dreams of transforming and regenerating her Alexei took possession of her lively imagination. And what so frequently befalls the majority of young wives happened inevitably in the case of Sofia Nikolaievna: her consciousness of her husband's intellectual inferiority, even his lack of comprehension and sympathy, in no wise hindered her from resigning herself to him in a passionate abandonment of boundless love but already a dim feeling of unrest had begun to dawn in her soul, she felt that he did not love her as she had a right to be loved that even in her company he had eves only for the mill-pond and the islet, for the steppe and the quail, for the river and the fish that she detested so heartily. This feeling of jealousy, at first dimly and vaguely felt, was already developing in her fervent heart; and the gloomiest forebodings arose within her as she contemplated her future. Stepan Michailovitsch, who, in like manner, had been distracted by being forced to keep a constant eye on his daughters' behaviour. was now able to observe his daughter-in-law, and his son too, more closely. He was so clever, in spite of his lack of education, and possessed such unerring delicacy of feeling, in spite of his rough exterior, that it did not take him long to discover the inequality of these two so-different natures. By this, I do not mean to insinuate that he was not pleased and touched by

their mutual affection and by the growing and pathetic devotion of Sofia Nikolaievna towards her husband. No, he delighted in it, but always with a lurking presentiment of evil, and without any steadfast belief in the durability of this satisfactory condition of affairs. He spoke long and earnestly with the young couple, both together, and singly. He wished to say things, to point out things, to give useful advice. But when he began to talk, he found himself quite incapable of giving adequate expression to his own half-defined and halfunderstood thoughts and feelings; and was forced to fall back on the homely, well-worn, but sage precepts which old folks in those days were wont to instil into their children's minds as sure guides for a future life of honour and rectitude. His own lack of eloquence pained him, as he candidly admitted to his daughter-in-law, who, however, could always guess exactly what he had in his mind, whatever difficulty he found in expressing himself. To his son he remarked: "Your wife is a sensible woman, but now and then too hasty. If she lets her tongue run away with her, don't hesitate to rebuke her: but forgive her directly afterwards, and don't sulk or bear malice. Take care you always speak out when she does anything to annoy you, for you can rely upon her good heart, and she will never put anyone before you." Speaking in confidence to Sofia Nikolaievna, he said: "My dear little daughter-in-law, God has withheld none of His gifts from you, but I have one word of advice to offer you: restrain your hot blood. Your husband is a good and honourable man: his disposition is mild, and he will never do anything to hurt your feelings. Now, for your part, never do anything to grieve him! Honour him, and treat him with respect! When the wife has no respect for her husband, there is but a poor prospect of happiness. If he acts or speaks contrary to your mind, you will do well to keep silence and not to make a fuss over trifles. I love you with all my heart and can read you like a book. Most earnestly I entreat you to keep a tight hand over yourself. Moderation is best in everything, even in devotion and reverence."

His son accepted his father's counsel with his customary awe and respect; Sofia Nikolaievna, with the warm and loving gratitude of a daughter. Many other matters were discussed:

the future life in Ufa, Alexei Stepanovitsch's coming career in the service of the Government, the necessary means for the young pair's life in the city. Every point was minutely examined and considered, and on all points all were finally and unanimously agreed.

At last came the day of departure. The silk curtains and bed-hangings had all been taken down, the satin and muslin slips with their wide lace borders had been removed from the pillows, and all these fine things had been packed up and despatched to Ufa. All sorts of provisions for the journey were cooked and baked. Spiritual aid was not forgotten, and old Father Vasili was summoned to offer up prayers for travellers. Horses had been bespoken, not in Noikino this time, but at Korovino, forty versts from Bagrovo. Thus far the spirited home team were to convey them—those same six matchless horses that had brought them to the old home. For the last time they sat down to table together: for the last time Stepan Michailovitsch pressed his daughter-in-law to taste his favourite dishes. The coach stood ready at the door. All rose from the dinner table and went into the salon, where they seated themselves, and a silence fell on them. Stepan Michailovitsch rose from his chair, crossed himself, and commenced to utter the parting Farewell.1 Everyone, except Stepan Michailovitsch, was in tears, and he himself could scarce refrain from weeping too. While blessing and embracing his daughter-in-law, he whispered in her ear: "Rejoice my old heart with a grandson!" Sofia Nikolaievna blushed, and bending down, kissed the old man's hands, which this time were not withdrawn. Outside the house all the household and the greater part of the peasantry were assembled round the balcony staircase. Some of them ventured to approach to bid their young master and mistress Farewell, but Stepan Michailovitsch, who disliked these parting scenes, called out to them: "Don't intrude! Make your obeisance, and then be off!" Only Fedosia and Peter were permitted to kiss Sofia Nikolaievna. The young travellers sprang nimbly into the coach, and like a feather it was whirled away by the lusty team. For awhile Stepan Michailovitsch remained

¹ It is the custom in Russia to take leave of travellers setting out on a long journey in this fashion. [Tr. S. R.]

standing silent, shading his eyes with his hand from the blinding sun, and trying to distinguish the coach through the fleeting clouds of dust upon the highway. But soon it vanished behind the hill where the threshing-ground lay, and the old man returned to his room and lay down to sleep.

SKETCH V

LIFE IN UFA

For the first few moments following her departure Sofia Nikolaievna could only feel the pain of the parting with her father-in-law; she could only think of this old man, whom she had learnt to love so well, and who was now grieving over her absence. But soon the regular swaving of the coach, the pleasant sight of field and forest flying past the windows, the shady mountain spurs round which the road was winding—all these had a soothing influence on her spirit, and she felt the most intense joy at the thought that now she would never set eves on Bagrovo again. This joy increased to such a pitch that it was impossible for the young wife to entirely conceal it, although she was conscious that such a feeling must needs be unwelcome to her husband. It seemed to her as if Alexei Stepanovitsch were gloomier than the occasion warranted, and probably this might have given rise to some unpleasantness: luckily the presence of Parascha prevented this catastrophe. The coach rolled rapidly through Noikina, accompanied by the joyous shouts of the Mordvins who ran out to meet it: over the rickety bridge, where the bank of the Nasiagai joins a tributary of the Bokla; sped past Polibino, and, crossing the Nasiagai for the second time, arrived at Korovino, where the relay of horses was awaiting the travellers. Bagrovo horses were to be baited and rested, and sent back home early the next day. Sofia Nikolaievna had brought writing materials, and wrote a warm letter of thanks to her father and mother-in-law, which, sooth to say, was solely intended for Stepan Michailovitsch. The latter guessed as much and treasured the letter in a secret drawer of his little old writing table, where it was safe from any prying eyes: and where it was accidentally found by Sofia Nikolaievna herself, eight years later, after the old man's death.

The fresh horses were harnessed to the coach, and our travellers continued their journey, after bidding adieu to the coachman and postillion, the latter rôle being filled on this occasion by the long-shanked Tanaitschenok. Fate seemed determined to shew especial favour towards Sofia Nikolaievna, for it was found quite impossible to pay the appointed visit to the Erlykins. The bridge across a deep river, which it was necessary to cross in order to reach their estate, had collapsed. To wait until it had been repaired would have taken too much time, so the newly-married pair decided to travel direct to Ufa. What dreary and wretched hours was the young wife spared, by this toward event! The nearer they approached Ufa, the warmer grew the fount of her filial affection. The image of the suffering father (from whom she had already been separated for more than two weeks) surrounded only by neglectful servants, was ever present to her vivid imagination. The passage of the Bielaia in a dilapidated ferry boat, which delayed the travellers for more than an hour, in addition to the exceedingly toilsome ascent of the mountainous shore—all this strained Sofia Nikolaievna's nerves to the utmost degree. and wrought upon her impatient and irritable temper. last, arrived at home, she hastened in a feverish state of anxiety to her father's room, and opened the door softly. The old man lay in bed as usual, and beside him, in the armchair which hitherto had been sacred to Sofia Nikolaievna, sat his servant-the Kalmuck Nikolai!

I must now tell you all about this Kalmuck. In former times it was quite a common thing in the Government of Ufa for folks to buy Kalmuck and Kirghiz children of both sexes from their parents or other relations, and the children so purchased became the absolute property of the purchaser. Some thirty years before the already-recorded events, Nikolai Feodorovitsch bought two little Kalmucks, whom he caused to be baptised and of whom he had grown very fond, treating them with the utmost indulgence. As the boys grew older, he had them taught to read and write and installed them as his personal attendants. Both were clever, active, and apparently full of zeal. But as soon as the Pugatschevian

revolt broke out, they ran away and joined the rebels. One of them was killed almost immediately; the other, Nikolai, formerly his master's favourite, ingratiated himself with the notorious agitator. Tschika, who was in high favour with Pugatschev. As everybody knows, a great number of mutinous serfs were encamped for a long time on the far shore of the Bielaia, directly opposite Ufa; among these was the Kalmuck Nikolai, who occupied a responsible position. It was said that he had been the worst brigand in the district, and had uttered specially menacing threats against his master and benefactor, Subin. The tale went that each time the rebels prepared to cross the Bielaia in order to seize the defenceless city, a great army of troops appeared on the crest of the precipitous opposite shore, headed by an old man mounted on a snow-white steed. bearing a lance in his right hand and the Cross in his left. And each time the cowardly crew of rascals was too terrified to carry out their design. While they hesitated and delayed. the news arrived of the capture of Pugatschev. This was the signal for the dispersal of the base camp. The Pugatschev revolt was subdued, and the fugitive serfs were, for the most part, captured and brought to justice. Among these was the Kalmuck Nikolai, who was tried and condemned to be hanged. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but I have been solemnly assured that Nikolai, who had been tried in Ufa, had the rope actually round his neck, when Subin. exercising his right of ownership, granted a pardon to his former favourite, and took him back into his own service on his own bail and responsibility. The Kalmuck professed great repentance for his misdeeds, and sought to rehabilitate himself by zealous service. By degrees he found means to insinuate himself afresh into his master's confidence: when Sofia Nikolaievna took over the control of the house after the death of her stepmother, she found the fellow already installed as head-servant and her father's favourite. principally owing to the fact that he had been in high favour with his late mistress. The Kalmuck, who had inflicted innumerable insults and injuries upon the young lady during her period of humiliation, was cunning enough to perceive the altered situation, and played the part of penitent sinner with great adroitness, attributing all his insolence to the defunct stepmother, and pleading that he had been compelled to carry out her tyrannical orders. The magnanimous, fourteen-year-old mistress, who, by uttering a single word, could have had him banished for ever from the house, believed in the sincerity of his repentance, and herself entreated her father to let him remain in his situation. Eventually, things turned out very unsatisfactorily, for she was greatly annoyed by his arbitrary attitude and the suspicious way in which sums of money confided to his keeping disappeared; while she could not fail to observe that he was secretly growing more familiar with her father than she approved. Still, in consideration of his indefatigable care of her father (in whose room he always slept) and his excellent service as house-steward, she contented herself with rebuking him gently, and left the wretch free to make his footing in the house still more secure. After Sofia Nikolaievna was betrothed, she had to busy herself with the preparation of her trousseau and the rest of her dowry furnishings: she was compelled to spend considerable time with her bridegroom, and consequently less time with her father; and could give but superficial attention to household matters. The Kalmuck made the most of this favourable opportunity, and each day strengthened his influence over his old and sick master.

In anticipation of getting rid of his mistress and of becoming sole master in the house, he grew bolder and bolder, and made no attempt to conceal his arrogance. Sofia Nikolaievna would not have hesitated to put him in his place with prompt severity, but, to her infinite distress, she found her father growing more and more absolutely dependent on the Kalmuck's services, and becoming more and more influenced by him. The final days before, and the early days after, the wedding, and now the two weeks' absence of the young pair, had sufficed the astute Kalmuck to gain full control of his halfdead master; and the first sight of this lackey seated in her chair (a thing he had never dared to do before) opened Sofia Nikolaievna's eyes to the true state of affairs. She threw such a look at the favourite, as quite abashed him, and he slunk out of the room. The old man evinced none of the joy at the sight of his daughter that she had expected, and he hastened to inform her that he himself had frequently requested the

Kalmuck to sit beside him in the armchair. Sofia Nikolajevna replied briefly: "You are making a great mistake, father; you will spoil him, and then will be obliged to get rid of him. I know him better than you do," and hastened to change the unpleasant subject by expressing her great joy at finding her beloved invalid no worse. Alexei Stepanovitsch came into the room, and the old man who was much affected by the tender concern of his daughter and the sympathetic kindness of his son-in-law, as well as by their mutual love, listened affectionately to their account of their visit and blessed God for their happiness. Sofia Nikolaievna promptly set to work to make the necessary arrangements for her new position; selected three adjacent rooms for herself; and at the end of a few days was able to receive visitors without in the least disturbing her sick father. She then determined to resume her place as head of the household, and to take over the care of her father, relegating the Kalmuck to his former subordinate position: but the fellow, who had always hated her, considered himself sufficiently strongly established to engage in open warfare with his young mistress. While redoubling his attentions to old Subin, he managed, with incredible audacity, to insult the daughter, and especially her unassuming husband, in every possible way, until Alexei Stepanovitsch, for all his forbearance and easy-going disposition, lost all patience and told his wife that such a state of things was simply intolerable. For some time Sofia Nikolaievna refrained from troubling her invalid father, and herself attempted to keep Nikolai within the bounds of decency. She counted upon his prudence, and, farther, upon his knowledge of her firm character, believing that he would not risk driving her to extremity. But the wily Asiatic (as everyone in the house called him) was assured of victory from the first, and did his utmost to irritate Sofia Nikolaievna, in the hope of driving her into a furious rage. Long ago he had succeeded in convincing his old master that the young mistress could not endure him-the faithful Kalmuck-and that she had made up her mind to drive him out of the house. This information had greatly agitated and disturbed the sick man, and he had sworn by all that was sacred that he would sooner die than be parted from his Nikolai. Sofia Nikolaievna, speaking in the mildest and most forbearing tone, tried to make her father comprehend that the Kalmuck conducted himself with the greatest insolence towards her and her husband, carrying out her orders so negligently that it was not difficult to see that his intention was to annoy her. Nikolai Feodorovitsch grew terribly excited on hearing her complaints: he refused to listen to her, assured her that, for his own part, he was perfectly satisfied with the Kalmuck, and begged her to leave the man in peace, and commission one or another of the servants to carry out her orders. It cost the haughty young woman many and bitter pangs to submit to the will of a base slave in her own father's house, where she had been accustomed to rule absolutely. Still, she loved her father so devotedly and felt such an urgent longing to tend his sick bed and to ease his sufferings so far as lay in her power, that for long enough it never even entered her mind to leave the house, and thereby abandon her father wholly to the influence of the infamous Kalmuck and the rest of the servants. restrained her anger and her injured pride: her orders were henceforth given to other servants, but it was impossible not to see how persistently the Kalmuck interfered and prevented them being carried out as she wished. She entreated her father to forbid the Kalmuck his room, while she was in it: but this prohibition was very soon infringed. Nikolai was always finding fresh pretexts to sneak into the old man's room; and the invalid himself gave the man every occasion for so doing, by continually calling for his services. And this wretched state of things continued for some months.

Sofia Nikolaievna had arranged her social life in Ufa entirely to suit herself: she saw a great deal of her personal friends, entertaining them and being entertained by them in turn. She was merely on formal and polite terms with the rest of the citizens. Alexei Stepanovitsch had formerly been known to everyone in Ufa, but now was treated with much greater intimacy by Sofia Nikolaievna's friends, who learnt to value his sterling, good qualities; and he was very well pleased with these new friends, who formed his wife's especial social circle.

Very shortly after her return from Bagrovo Sofia Nikolaievna experienced a peculiar indisposition, the news of which filled the heart of Stepan Michailovitsch with joy. The

continuation of the ancient line of the Bagrovs, the coming descendant of the illustrious Schimon, became the dearest object of his hopes and ambitions; and secretly caused him much solicitude and care. No sooner had his son communicated the joyful tidings to him than Stepan Michailovitsch cherished the hope—nay the conviction—that a grandson would be born. Later, the family declared that his temper had been extraordinarily amiable during the months of anticipation. He immediately ordered prayers to be offered up in church "for the health of the noble Sofia." Many a fault and many a debt was overlooked or remitted to his serfs or neighbours. Everyone was expected to offer him congratulations; and beer and brandy were most liberally bestowed upon these well-wishers. In the midst of all this joyous tumult, it suddenly occurred to him that he ought to reward his tea-and-coffee handmaiden, Aksiutka, whom, Heaven alone knows why, he had always regarded with especial favour. Aksiutka was originally an orphan peasant child, who had been admitted into the household when seven vears old, solely because no one else would give her a home or a situation. She was very ugly, carroty-haired, her face was covered with freckles, and her eves were of a doubtful hue, while her dress was invariably untidy and her temper atrocious. Was it possible indeed, that anyone could be attracted by such a being? But in spite of all, Stepan Michailovitsch had a great regard for her, and not a day passed without him sending her something good from the family dinner-table. As soon as she was a grown-up lass, Stepan Michailovitsch appointed her to serve him with his early cup of tea, and utilised these occasions to chat with her for hours at a stretch. Aksiutka was now well advanced in the thirties. One fine morning, a couple of days after receiving the happy news from Ufa, Stepan Michailovitsch said to her: "You stupid girl, why do you always go about in that dirty old smock? Be off, and dress yourself decently: put on your holiday clothes, and I will find you a husband!" Aksiutka shewed all her teeth in a grin, thinking that the master was making game of her, and replied: "Who wants to have a poor orphan like me? At the best, only the shepherd, Kir-

¹ A traditional Varangian (or Slavic Russian). [Tr. H. R.]

sanka!" The shepherd was noted for his plain looks and stupidity. This retort appeared to irritate Stepan Michailovitsch. "If I choose a husband for you, you shall have the best lad that can be found; so be off, and smarten yourself up, and come back as soon as you are ready!" Aksiutka departed in a state of joyful astonishment, and Stepan Michailovitsch sent for Ivan Malisch,1 to whom we have already been introduced. He was a youth, four-and-twenty years old with ruddy cheeks; slim, yet strong of build, and a smart fellow in all respects. He was a son of the faithful old retainer, Boris Petrov Chorev, who died during the Pugatschev revolt, worn out, as everybody knew, by the responsibility of looking after the New-Bagrovian serfs, who had been committed to his charge, when the family fled to Astrachan for safety. Ivan had acquired the nickname of Malisch,2 as he had an elder brother also called Ivan, who had inherited his father's nickname of Chorev.³ Ivan Malisch made his appearance before his master, who observed his good looks with great satisfaction, and addressed him in such a kind and friendly tone, that the young man's heart fairly throbbed with joy: "Malisch, I am going to have you married." "Your gracious will be done, little father Stepan Michailovitsch!" replied the young man, who was devoted, body and soul, to his master. "Run away and dress yourself nicely and come back to me as quickly as you can!" Off dashed Malisch to do as he was told. Aksiutka, however, was ready the first: plastered her red hair with butter to make it lie smoothly, and had put on her Sunday skirt and bodice, and forced her big feet into a pair of shoes; and, with all this preparation, was not a bit more beautiful! She could not prevent her mouth twisting into a permanent smile of delight, which she bashfully attempted to conceal by covering her face with her hand. Stepan Michailovitsch was highly diverted. "Ah," said he, "how pleased she is to have caught a husband!" Up ran Malisch, and turned cold with horror when he perceived the bedizened scarecrow, Aksiutka. "Here is your bride," said Stepan Michailovitsch, gaily, "she serves me faithfully:

¹ See Sketch III. [Tr.] ² Malisch means the Little One. [Tr. S.R.] ³ Chorev signifies The Pole Cat. [Tr. H.R.]

your father served me faithfully, too: you can always rely upon my protection!" "Arischa," he continued to his wife who had just arrived on the scene, "the bride must have her wedding dower prepared: I shall give her a cow too, and the wedding shall be celebrated with plenty of beer, brandy, and good cheer." No resistance was possible. The wedding took place immediately. Aksiutka was madly in love with her good-looking husband; but Malisch contracted a downright hatred for his repulsive bride, who was ten years his senior. Aksiutka persecuted her husband from morning to night with her jealousy, for which she had only too good cause; while Malisch thrashed his wife early and late, and not without cause too, for the stick alone—and that only for a few minutes at a time—could make her stop scolding. Alas, alas, Stepan Michailovitsch had made a sad mistake; and in the joy of his own heart had prepared an evil lot for others!

The intense joy of the old man at this period was revealed to me—not so much by the accounts given by relatives—as by a letter written by him to Sofia Nikolaievna about the same time. It is scarcely credible that this rugged man (although, as we have already seen, capable of true and sincere affection) should have been able to express his feelings so exquisitely. The whole letter breathes the tenderest solicitude, and is full of entreaties and admonitions to her for the care of her health. I can only recall a few words of the letter. "If you were but here with me," wrote the old man, "I would not let the least breath of wind blow upon you, nor let a speck of dust defile you."

Sofia Nikolaievna valued this affection of her father-in-law at its true worth (although she was perfectly aware that at least the half of it was on account of the expected heir) and dutifully promised to observe all his directions and commands. She belonged to that order of women who pay for the bliss of motherhood by a nervous indisposition, which is worse to endure than downright illness. In addition to this, her mental suffering was intense: her relations with her father became more strained each day that passed, and the insolence of the Kalmuck more unbearable. Alexei Stepanovitsch was content enough on hearing that his wife's condition was quite natural under the circumstances, that nothing dangerous threatened

her, and that her indisposition would soon pass away. He was sorry, certainly, that his wife suffered so much, but did not shew any special concern; and this indifference helped to make Sofia Nikolaievna ill. As far as Alexei Stepanovitsch's life in his father-in-law's house was concerned, he had made up his mind to avoid any intercourse whatever with the Kalmuck; he fulfilled his duties in the Supreme Court most zealously, having every expectation of being shortly appointed State Agent. Meanwhile he tranquilly awaited a better condition of affairs at home, and annoyed his wife by his composure. And so some more months passed away without bringing much satisfaction to anyone.

But the Kalmuck was by no means disposed to let matters rest here: he was determined to bring about a crisis. As he could not fail to perceive that Sofia Nikolaievna was putting the utmost restraint on her just indignation, he resolved to exhaust her patience. He hoped to irritate her and to force her to complain about him to her father, having previously warned his old master that the young mistress intended to have him turned out of the house. Without waiting for any special opportunity, the fellow made such insolent and outrageous remarks about Sofia Nikolaievna and her husband to his fellow servants—speaking in an audible tone, and selecting an occasion when his young mistress was standing at the open door of the adjacent room, not a couple of steps distant—that Sofia Nikolaievna was for the moment paralysed by his audacity. Recovering herself quickly, without uttering a word to the Kalmuck, she rushed into her father's room, and, nearly breathless with rage, told him how his favourite had treated The Kalmuck instantly followed her. Pulling a most lamentable face, and crossing himself before the sacred picture, he interrupted her by protesting that the whole story was a slander, that he had never said anything of the sort, and that Sofia Nikolaievna was guilty of a grievous sin in trying to ruin a poor man! "Do you hear what he says, Sonitschka?" asked the sick man in an agitated voice. Sofia Nikolaievna, wounded to the very depths of her soul, forgot all her magnanimous resolutions, forgot that any excitement was very injurious for her father, and denounced his favourite with such vehemence that the latter was fairly driven from the

room. At length she said to the old man: "After such insults, father, I cannot remain any longer in the same house with this Kalmuck. You must choose which of us you will banish—him or me!" and she rushed out of the room like one possessed. The invalid fell into a swoon, and the Kalmuck hurried to his assistance. After the application of the necessary restoratives the old man recovered, and had a long and private conversation with his favourite, at the end of which he sent for his daughter. "Sonitschka," said he, with as much firmness and composure as he could summon, "in my deplorable condition I find it impossible to part with Nikolai. My life is dependent on his services. Take this money and buy the Veselovski house!" Sofia Nikolaievna sank unconscious to the ground and was carried from the room.

And this was the end of the mutual and tender affection between father and daughter! This love, so immeasurably strengthened by the estrangement contrived by the stepmother, by the remorse and gratitude of the guilty father, by the warm and great-hearted magnanimity of the injured daughter, who condoned all the evil treatment she had suffered! This daughter, who had devoted herself so entirely to the sick old man, and who had only married on the understanding that she and he were never to be separated! And at what a moment was she bidden to leave him! Just when the doctors had declared that they could not answer for his living another month! However the doctors were mistaken in their prophecy, as is frequently the case to-day. The invalid survived for more than a year.

When Sofia Nikolaievna came to herself again and saw the pale and shocked countenance of her Alexei Stepanovitsch, she felt that there yet remained in the world one being who was devotedly attached to her. She flung her arms round her distressed husband, and a flood of tears relieved her overladen heart. She related all that had passed to him; and the telling of the tale renewed all the bitterness of the humiliation she had suffered, and placed the hopelessness of the situation in a still clearer light. Most assuredly she would have collapsed in utter despair, had she not been sustained and encouraged by her husband. Mild in character and yastly

inferior to his wife intellectually, Alexei Stepanovitsch was superior to her in that he never failed in case of need and never lost his presence of mind in the face of a crisis. It may appear strange that it was Alexei Stepanovitsch who infused courage and self-command into his wife: but this notable woman, in spite of all her mental gifts and apparent strength of character, possessed the unfortunate peculiarity that, whenever subjected to unexpected trials which wounded her in her affections, she became utterly helpless and disconcerted. As an impartial recorder of verbal communications. I must add that she was wont to attach far too much importance to the opinion of the world, and was far too much influenced by it; in spite of the fact that she herself was of much higher rank than the other members of the circle in which she moved. The thought of what society in Ufa would say about the matter, especially women of fashion and position what her husband's family would think, and, above all, what her father-in-law would think of her deserting her dving father—these harassing ideas tormented her haughty, sensitive spirit, and caused her almost as great agony as the pangs of her injured filial affection. She dreaded lest anyone should blame her father for his ingratitude towards his own child. quite as much as she feared being accused of heartlessness towards her dying parent. It was quite impossible to conceal the rupture; in some way or another everyone in the city would get to know all about it, and would blame either father or daughter. A feeling of the deepest compassion, mingled with astonishment, overwhelmed Alexei Stepanovitsch at the sight of his wife's distress. It was a hard business to console and reassure his Sofia Nikolaievna. Her excited imagination conjured up all sorts of frightful prospects, and she painted her future in the blackest colours. She utterly refused to believe in any possible chance of escaping from her present overwhelming difficulties: and flatly declined to try to make the best of the situation. But love and a simplicity of nature, which latter quality was utterly wanting in Sofia Nikolaievna, prompted Alexei Stepanovitsch to act for the best; and after he had checked the first uncontrolled outburst of passionate lamentation, he began to reason with his wife in his homely but loving way, until she gradually became, if not quite

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consoled, at any rate more calm and sensible. He assured her that, hitherto, she had conscientiously fulfilled her duty as a loving daughter should; that the same sense of duty now bade her defer to the wishes of her sick father; that it was perfectly obvious that Nikolai Feodorovitsch had long since made up his mind that she was to have a house of her own; that it would be a terrible blow for him-a sick and dving man—to have to part with the Kalmuck, and to be deprived of his skilful and devoted nursing; that his father, Stepan Michailovitsch, should be made acquainted with the true facts of the case; and as for their friends, well, they could explain that it had always been Nikolai Feodorovitsch's wish to see his daughter and son-in-law settled in their own house during his own lifetime. Sofia Nikolaievna could visit her father twice daily, and to all intents and purposes look after him as well as ever: that everyone in the town would learn the real truth in time, and already had heard rumours of it, and would lav all the blame on the Kalmuck and entirely exonerate her. "Besides," added he, "it is possible that your father spoke in haste, and, when it comes to the point, will not wish to be separated from you. You must see him again and talk things over with him!" Sofia Nikolaievna made no reply, and was silent awhile fixing an earnest and enquiring gaze on her husband: she felt revived and comforted by the sincerity and simplicity which breathed in every word of his plain and unaffected speech, and this in a manner hitherto unknown to her complex nature. She wondered that she had not thought of all this before, and embraced her Alexei Stepanovitsch with love and gratitude. And thus they made up their minds that Sofia Nikolaievna was to go to Nikolai Feodorovitsch and persuade him to reconsider his decision. and to permit her and her husband to remain in his house-on the understanding that they lived quite to themselves and never came in contact with the Kalmuck-at least until the time when Sofia Nikolaievna, with God's help, should have completely recovered after her confinement. This proposal was based on the plea that for a woman in Sofia Nikolaievna's state of health, it would be exceedingly dangerous to continually jolt over the badly-paved streets of Ufa; while it was quite certain that nothing would deter her from visiting

her invalid father daily. But the conference with her father led to nothing. The old man told his daughter quietly, but firmly, that his decision was not the outcome of a momentary fit of temper, but the result of much earnest deliberation. "From the very first I have known, my dear Sonitschka," said Nikolai Feodorovitsch, "that it would be absolutely impossible for you and Nikolai to live in the same house together. You have an antipathy for him, for which I do not blame you, for he behaved very badly to you in the old days. You forgave him, but you forgot nothing. I know that he occasionally causes you dissatisfaction, but you are determined to look at matters in the worst possible light".... "Father!" interrupted Sofia Nikolaievna; however the old man would not give her time to finish, and went on: "Wait! and listen until I have said all I have to say! Admitted that the Kalmuck is as much to blame as you say, then so much the more inadmissible for you to remain under the same roof with him, for you know it is impossible for me to part with him. Have some pity for my miserable and helpless condition! I can scarcely breathe, I am a living corpse—and you know that the man has to lift me up twenty times a day, to turn me, and to lay me down again. No one can supply his place—only one thing is needful to me now: peace of mind! Death stands at my door! Each instant I must be prepared to enter Eternity! The thought of this Kalmuck embittering your life robs me of all peace. There is no other way out of the difficulty: and we must part, my dearest child. Go, and dwell in your own home! Whenever you come to see me you shall not be troubled by the sight of this obnoxious man; and he will be only too pleased to keep out of your way. He has now attained his object, has forced you to leave the house, and can plunder me to his heart's content. I am perfectly aware that he does so; but I forgive him on account of his devoted care of me by day and night. The way he exerts himself for me almost passes the limit of human strength. Don't distress me by refusing to do as I desire you; but take the money, and buy yourself the house in Golubinaia Street!"

I shall not attempt a description of the multifarious uncertainties, doubts, inward combats, fits of passion, and torrents of tears which succeeded each other with Sofia

Nikolaievna. Briefly, she was forced to accept the money; the house was purchased, and two weeks later Alexei Stepanovitsch and his young wife took possession of their new abode. It was a pretty, plainly-built little house, which had never before been occupied. Sofia Nikolaievna set to work to make her domestic arrangements with her wonted zeal and energy. But her health, affected by her condition and still more by her recent excitement and emotion, was badly shaken, and would not stand this fresh fatigue: she became seriously ill, was compelled to keep her bed for two weeks, and nearly a month elapsed before she was able to go and see her father.

The first meeting of Sofia Nikolaievna and her father, after her recovery, was both sorrowful and affecting. The old man had grown much weaker: he had vearned after his daughter, reproaching himself with having caused her illness; and had been terribly afflicted by the utter impossibility of visiting her. But now at least they were reunited and shed tears of joy. Nikolai Feodorovitsch was greatly shocked to observe how emaciated and disfigured his daughter had become, which, however, was less the result of her illness and grief than of her special physical condition. There are certain women whose appearance at these periods undergoes a great change, they even grow ugly, and this was the case with Sofia Nikolaievna. In a very short time the most perfect agreement and most amicable relations were re-established between father and daughter. The Kalmuck kept most religiously out of Sofia Nikolaievna's sight. . . . Stepan Michailcvitsch, alone, did not approve of Sofia Nikolaievna being separated from her dving father. Sofia Nikolaievna had foreseen this, and, before she fell ill, had written a very frank letter to her father-in-law. in which she strove to explain away and excuse her father's decision. But all her trouble was wasted. In this affair Stepan Michailovitsch considered that Sofia Nikolaievna. and not Nikolai Feedorovitsch, was to blame, and was of opinion that it was her duty to have borne her troubles in silence, and not to have permitted even a trace of discontent to be seen, whatever rascally tricks the base Kalmuck had played. He wrote to Alexei Stepanovitsch, rebuking him for permitting his wife to leave her father "in the hands of a knave." The idea of a separation being necessary for the sick man's tranquillity of mind, was utterly incomprehensible to Stepan Michailovitsch, and he was equally incapable of understanding that in certain cases a wife is justified in acting without her husband's sanction. But in this case both husband and wife were in perfect accord.

In order to complete the domestic arrangements of her little house more quickly and comfortably. Sofia Nikolajevna called in the assistance of one of her intimate friends, a widow and a burgess of Ufa, Katerina Alexeievna Tscheprunova, This was a simple and worthy woman, who lived in a little house of her own in a distant suburb, where she earned a scanty living by the sale of the produce of her little orchard. In addition she carried on various little bits of trades in order to support herself and her darling Andrei, her crippled and only son, even selling cakes in the market. The principal branch of her business was, however, the sale of Bokhara woollen goods, to purchase which she made a journey to Orenburg each year. On her mother's side Katerina Alexeievna was related to Sofia Nikolaievna, but the latter was weak-minded enough to conceal the fact, which, nevertheless, was known to every soul in the city. Katerina Alexeievna was devotedly attached to her distinguished and aristocratic cousin; and during the late stepmother's reign of persecution and humiliation, she used to secretly visit and comfort Sofia Nikolaievna, in spite of being forbidden the house. Since Time had wrought the great change in her position, the grateful girl had constituted herself the special benefactress and patroness of the poor cake-seller. In private, Sofia Nikolaievna lavished kindnesses upon her faithful and disinterested relative, and treated her with the utmost respect; but in public she was the vice-regent's daughter, and her cousin was only her humble protégée. But the good-natured Katerina Alexeievna never took the slightest offence, and had even suggested this plan herself: she loved her beautiful cousin with simple adoration, regarding her in the light of some beneficent being of a higher sphere, and could never have forgiven herself, if she had, in any way, marred the splendour of Sofia Nikolaievna's position. It was but natural that the young husband, Alexei Stepanovitsch, should be made a party to the little secret; and, in spite of his ancient and aristocratic descent, of which his

family were so inordinately proud, he accepted the poor little shopkeeper as a cherished and honoured relation of his wife, and never failed to treat her with regard and respect. He would even have kissed her toil-worn hand, but she would never consent to his doing such a thing. Only by the most pressing entreaties did Sofia Nikolaievna prevent him from openly acknowledging the relationship to his family and friends alike. And what fervent devotion was awakened in the simple soul of Katerina Alexeievna by his kindly demeanour! With what zeal and energy she strove to straighten out all domestic differences and troubles in days to come! Assisted by this good woman who knew exactly where anything was to be found, or where anything was to he had cheaply, Sofia Nikolaievna was very soon able to regulate her household affairs to a nicety.

Of course there was a great deal of gossip and scandal in the city, when it became known that the young Bagrovs had bought a house and had gone to live in it by themselves. Much that was exaggerated, and much that was false was circulated; but Alexei Stepanovitsch had not been mistaken. Soon enough the true facts of the case were known, and principally through the Kalmuck's own agency; for he was continually boasting in his own circle of how he had driven the supercilious young mistress out of the house, while he never lost an opportunity of abusing and slandering her. And so the evil rumours soon ceased altogether.

In those early days, this was the manner of life led by the newly-married pair. During the earlier part of the morning Alexei Stepanovitsch was engaged on his work in the Supreme Court. When he set out there he was accompanied by his wife, whom he dropped at her father's house. On his return journey, he called for his wife, spent some time with his father-in-law, and then the young couple went home, where a plain dinner awaited them. This tête-à-tête meal in their own house, paid for with their own money, had a special homely charm; but custom and Time worked their inevitable will, and the novelty very soon passed away. In spite of her delicate health and the moderate means at her disposal, Sofia Nikolaievna had succeeded in making her little house very attractive. Good taste and attention to details can compensate for lack

of money to a certain extent; and many of the Bagrovs visitors considered the establishment quite splendid. The most difficult part of the domestic arrangements was allotting their duties to the servants. Two of the servants included in Sofia Nikolaievna's dower, her footman, Feodor Micheiev, and her abigail, the black-eyed Parascha, had made a match of it: while the young servant from Bagrovo, Yefrem Yevseyitsch, an upright faithful youth, who loved his young mistress from the depths of his true heart (which could not be said of the rest of the servants) had Sofia Nikolaievna's young laundress, Annuschka, bestowed upon him for a wife. The young mistress was very fond of her trusty Yefrem, and with good reason. This jewel of a man proved the depth of his attachment to her throughout his life. ¹

Time went on, and life in Ufa gradually sank into a regular and monotonous groove. By reason of her poor health and depressed spirits, Sofia Nikolaievna very rarely went into any company. And even then, however, she only received or visited her intimate friends; and this narrow circle still lacked the best friends of all, namely the Tschitschagovs, who only arrived in town with their mother in the late autumn. The continued ill-humour of Sofia Nikolaievna, which might justly be attributed to her disturbed nervous system, was at first very disturbing and

¹ Yevseyitsch (as he was called for short), later became the guardian or body-servant of her eldest son, whom he tended with the most affectionate solicitude. I knew the worthy man well. It is now some fifteen years since I last saw him. It was at the estate of one of Stepan Michailovitsch's grandsons in the Government of Peusa, where he, a blind, old man, was spending the last years of his life. That summer I spent a whole month at the place, and every day I went to fish in the early morning, in the fine lake formed by the mouth of the rivulet Kakarma where it joins the charming Insa. The hut, where Yevseyitsch lived, was built close at the water's edge, and each day as I approached the lake, I perceived the bent, white-haired old man leaning against the wall of his cottage, facing the rising sun; his withered hands clasped round a staff which he held pressed against his breast; while his sightless eyes were raised towards the Eastern sky. He could not see the light, but he enjoyed the warmth, which comforted him in the chilly dawn; and his countenance was at once serene and melancholy. His hearing was so acute that he could hear me approaching from a great distance, and he would greet me patronisingly as an old fisherman a young one, although at that time I was over fifty years old. "Ah, so you are there, my Falcon!" (this was his name for me) "God give you good sport!" . . . Two years later he expired in the arms of his son, his daughter, and his wife—the last surviving him some years.

alarming to Alexei Stepanovitsch. He simply could make nothing of such a state of things. Suffering without any definite illness-misery without any cause-or rather illness as the result of groundless melancholy, and melancholy as the result of a non-existent or imperceptible illness—nothing of the sort had ever occurred in the course of his previous life. But as he gradually realised that his wife's condition was neither critical nor dangerous, he grew accustomed to it and reconciled himself to the situation. He made up his mind it was all imagination. This, in fact, had been his own explanation of Sofia Nikolaievna's earlier outbursts of passion and emotion, whenever he had been at a loss how to account for them. He ceased to worry himself over her, and began to feel very much bored. This was but natural. For all his love for his wife and for all the pity he felt for her continual depression of spirits, it became very irksome to be compelled to listen for hours to a string of lamentations over a state of things which was only natural; and to endless ominous forebodings of the appalling consequences which her enceinte condition was bound to produce. Each day in the week Sofia Nikolaievna discovered some new and sinister symptom in herself, which she sought to explain in the most scientific way, by referring to one or other of her medical books. When she had discovered exactly what was the matter with her, that would be the cause of fresh distress. So long as she had imagined Alexei Stepanovitsch to be a man utterly incapable of deep feeling or fervent love, she had actually been much easier in her mind. "What God has denied a man," she was wont to say, "that will He not demand from him!" Unluckily Alexei Stepanovitsch in the first days of their marriage had proved to her by his passion and ardour that he was capable of the deepest love, and now she was quite convinced that he had already grown cold towards her. This dismal idea entirely dominated her too-fertile imagination. Her ingenious mind soon found a thousand good grounds for suspicion. First and foremost, she placed the hostile influences of his own family, her own ill health, above all the loss of her beauty, for her mirror shewed her only too plainly how changed she had become. Another reason was the utter indifference shewn for her gloomy misgivings by the cold-hearted Alexei

Stepanovitsch; and then he never shewed due interest in her condition, and never tried to amuse or pacify her: he was beginning to take more pleasure in the society of other women . . . and like a spark in a powder magazine, up sprang what until now had lurked unsuspected in the depths of her heart—that agonising, keen-sighted and yet blind passion jealousy! From that moment on—fresh uproars, reproaches. tears, quarrels-and reconciliations! And Alexei Stepanovitsch was innocent of the slightest offence against her. He never paid the slightest attention to any of his sisters' innuen-The sole authority to which he deferred at home was his father's, and that had only served to heighten his love and regard for his wife. His wife's sufferings distressed him considerably, if not overwhelmingly. The loss of her good looks he regarded as a misfortune of a quite temporary nature, and looked forward to the time when she would regain her beauty. He could not feel very cheerful when she was always so melancholy; but it was quite impossible for him to take all her presentiments and forebodings in earnest, as he considered them merely empty delusions. Like a great many other men, he understood very little of what was expected of him in the way of attention; besides it was a very wearisome and ticklish task to try to pacify or amuse a woman of Sofia Nikolajevna's type: it was so easy to make some taux bas, and put her into a still worse humour A great deal of skill and tact was necessary for the job, and Alexei Stepanovitsch possessed neither. It is quite possible that he did feel more comfortable and happy in other women's society, because there he was not in continual dread of arousing a storm of temper and irritability by some quite harmless remark. But Sofia Nikolaievna looked at the matter from a quite different point of view; this was the inevitable result of her sensitive and extravagant disposition. What could be expected when one possessed sound, strong, blunt nerves, and the other's nerves were irritable, delicate, and diseased? Sofia Nikolaievna's whole being was affected by emotions not even guessed at by Alexei Stepanovitsch It was only the Tschitschagovs who knew the real grounds of the trouble which existed in the the home of these young married people; and as Sofia Nikolajevna -far less Alexei Stepanovitsch-

made no allusion to the very delicate subject, they took the most kindly interest in the situation; and by their affectionate attentions, frequent visits, and sensible and sympathetic conversation, managed to pacify the unreasonable young wife, proving themselves at this juncture the truest friends of the newly-married pair.

And so matters remained between the young folks until Sofia Nikolaievna became a mother. In spite of all the commotion in her mind, her health was appreciably better during the last months of her pregnancy, and she was safely delivered of a daughter. It is true that Sofia Nikolaievna, and especially Alexei Stepanovitsch, would have preferred a son. But when the mother pressed her child to her heart, there was no distinction in that love between son and daughter. The feeling of maternal love possessed her entire soul, spirit, and being. Alexei Stepanovitsch thanked God for sparing his wife's life, was rejoiced that she was doing so well, and never gave the hoped-for son another thought.

But the news was very differently received at Bagrovo! Stepan Michailovitsch had desired a grandson so earnestly that at first he positively refused to believe that a granddaughter had been born. However when he had seen the news in his son's letter with his own eves, and convinced himself that there could be no possible doubt of the fact, he was greatly out of humour, would not permit the promised feast to be given to the peasantry, and would not write himself either to his son or to his daughter-in-law. To the latter he merely sent congratulations on her accouchement, and requested that the child should receive the name of Praskovia in baptism. in compliment to his beloved cousin, Praskovia Michailovua Kurolesova. As it happened, this wish of his had been anticipated, the little one having already had the name of Praskovia bestowed upon her when the prayers for her mother's safe delivery were offered. Stepan Michailovitsch's anger was both distressing and comical. Even his family laughed at him behind his back. The old man had the sense to see that he was quite foolish to make such a fuss about the matter, and yet he could do nothing else during the first days of his disappointment, so much had he accustomed himself to the delightful prospect of soon having a grandson, and thereafter

resting assured of the continuation of the noble line of Schimon. He had the genealogical tree removed and locked up, which for a considerable time past had been ready spread out on the table, on whose page each day he had hoped to inscribe the name of his grandson. He forbade his daughter, Aksinia Stepanovna, to go to Ufa to stand as the child's godmother. "Why should you go to the baptism of a girl? Such an event can happen any time and why should a fuss be made about it?"... However time and reflection worked their will, and at the end of a few days the frown disappeared from Stepan Michailovitsch's brow (on this occasion it had alarmed nobody) and the thought that his daughter-in-law might possibly have a son the following year pacified the old man. He wrote a very affectionate letter to Sofia Nikolaievna, scolding her playfully for disappointing his hopes and begging her to find a grandson the next year.

Sofia Nikolaievna was so completely absorbed in her new emotions and was so ravished by this new Heaven into which maternal love had admitted her, that she heeded nothing of her father-in-law's displeasure, and never even noticed that Aksinia Stepanovna was not present at the baptism. It was only with the greatest trouble that the young mother could be persuaded to remain in bed for the usual nine days after her accouchement. She felt so well that by the fourth day she declared she could dance. But she had no desire to dance. only to be always beside her child, denying herself sleep and rest in order to tend it day and night, for the little Praskovia had come into the world weak and ailing, as might well have been expected after all the sorrow and suffering which her mother had endured during the time of her pregnancy. The physicians would not permit Sofia Nikolaievna to nurse the child herself. To speak more correctly, the physician, Andrei Vurievitsh Avenarius, a highly intelligent, cultured, and amiable man, an intimate friend of the Bagrovs, would not allow it. As soon as ever it was possible Sofia Nikolaievna took her little one to the grandfather, that is to her father, Nikolai Feodorovitsch. She hoped that the sight of the little creature would please him, and that he might trace a likeness between the child and his first wife, Vera Ivanovna. It is probable that no such likeness existed, and according to my belief it

would be a most remarkable thing if any likeness could be found between a newly-born infant and an adult person: but Sofia Nikolaievna was always wont to declare that her first-born daughter resembled her grandmother as much as one drop of water resembles another. Old Subin was rapidly approaching his end, his mind and body were undergoing swift dissolution. He gazed listlessly at the child, which he was scarcely able to bless, and merely murmured: "I congratulate you, Sonitschka!" Sofia Nikolaievna was much distressed, both at the desperate condition of her father, whom she had not seen for more than a month, and at his indifference towards her angelic little Praskovia.

But the young mother soon forgot the whole world beside the cradle of her daughter. All interests, all possible pursuits and pleasures, paled before the mother's love, and Sofia Nikolaievna surrendered herself to this new passion with the most feverish ardour. No hand but hers was to lull the child to rest. She herself gave the child to the nurse, herself held it to the breast, and not without jealousy and grief did she witness a strange woman giving nourishment to her child. It may sound incredible, but it is a fact which Sofia Nikolaievna later confessed sorrowfully, that it was so intolerable to her to permit her child to remain for long at the nurse's breast, that she frequently took the half-suckled child out of the arms of the stranger and rocked and sang it to sleep herself. Sofia Nikolaievna now never found time to see anyone, not even her best friend Katerina Borisovna Tschitschagova, Naturally, everyone considered this very strange and ridiculous, and her intimate friends were very much vexed about it. After a while she resumed her daily visits to her father, always hurrying home in a state of the greatest apprehension, and enquiring if her daughter was all right. Her husband was left entirely to his own devices and might do exactly as he pleased, and Alexei Stepanovitsch, after spending a few days at home did not fail to observe that Sofia Nikolaievna took not the slightest notice of him, except to order him out of the little nursery, on the plea that too many people in the room would exhaust the air—herself, of course, never quitting the place. So he began to visit his friends and acquaintances, at first occasionally, and then more and more frequently, and last he got into the habit of leaving his own house every evening and going wherever he could have a game of boston or rocambole. Certain among the ladies of Ufa interested themselves in the neglected young husband, and joked and flirted with him, protesting that it was a work of charity to console the grass-widower; and they vowed that they hoped to receive Sofia Nikolaievna's due thanks in the event of her ever releasing herself from her miraculous devotion to her little daughter and making her re-appearance in society. Sofia Nikolaievna heard all about these pleasantries later, and was very much put out by them.

Katerina Alexeievna Tscheprunova, who came daily to visit her relative, observed the latter's conduct with mingled astonishment, pity, and vexation. She herself was a most affectionate mother, and deeply attached to her one afflicted child; but this maternal passion of Sofia Nikolaievna, which involved complete oblivion of everything else in the world. struck her as a species of insanity. She would sigh, groan, smite herself with her fist on breast and stomach (as was her wont in moments of great excitement) and protest that such exaggerated love was a crime against God, and that He would surely punish it. Sofia Nikolaievna took great offence at this, and ordered her to keep out of her nursery in future. Avenarius was the sole person who had the regular entrée of this sanctum. Sofia Nikolaievna of course discovered the symptoms of some fresh disease every day, and would then experiment with some cure according to Buchan's instructions; and the result usually proving unsatisfactory, she would then have recourse to Avenarius. He was quite puzzled how to deal with the poor mother, who would not be persuaded to give up her faith in her own physicking. So he prescribed various remedies, mostly of a simple, but sometimes of a more active, character, as the child was really in very poor health.

It is difficult to say where all this folly and delusion would have ended, if Providence had not struck an unexpected blowat Sofia Nikolaievna. Her cherub, her Praskovia, died suddenly. It is an open question whether excessive coddling, too much physic, or congenital weakness was the cause of death. Briefly, the fragile creature surrendered her life at the end of four months, as the result of an ordinary fit, such as nearly every young infant experiences. While sitting beside the cradle

of her Praskovia, Sofia Nikolaievna noticed a slight convulsion pass across the tiny face. She took the child in her arms. It was dead

This woman must have had a strong, nay an iron, constitution to have survived the shock. The doctors took it in turn to watch beside her. Sanden, Avenarius, Klauss-all friends of hers-for several days feared that her brain would give way, as she recognised no one. But with God's help her young and strong organisation triumphed over the threatened danger. The bereaved mother recovered her senses and her love for her husband (who likewise had felt the loss of his child deeply) a love which regained its old supremacy every moment that passed. It was her salvation. Sofia Nikolaievna regained consciousness for the first time during the fourth night after the baby's death, and heard an account of what had happened. When she recognised Alexei Stepanovitsch, whom at first she did not know, so changed was he by sorrow, and perceived her faithful friend, Katerina Alexeievna, a heartrending cry burst from her strained breast and a flood of salutary tears flowed from her eyes Until that moment she had not wept. She embraced Alexei Stepanovitsch and sobbed for a long time on his breast without uttering a word: he, for his part, cried like a child. The danger to the brain was now past; but a new peril threatened—death from complete physical exhaustion. The poor young woman had not been able to take any nourishment for four days; and now could not manage to eat a mouthful of food, nor take any medicine, nor even a drop of water. The situation was one of such danger that the physicians did not refuse the invalid's entreaty to be permitted to make her confession and receive the last Sacraments. The accomplishment of this Christian rite was beneficial to Sofia Nikolaievna: she slept naturally for the first time, awaking at the end of two hours, when, with a countenance beaming with joy, she told her husband that she had seen a picture of the Iberian Virgin, similar to that in their own parish church, in a dream; and added that if she were permitted to pray before the picture and kiss it, she knew that the Virgin would save her. The holy picture was at once brought to the house. The priest recited the prayers, "for the Health and Recovery of a Sick Person." At the words: "Pitifully behold, Oh, most Blessed Virgin, my grievous bodily sufferings," all present fell on their knees. repeating the words. Alexei Stepanovitsch was sobbing loudly. The sick woman also wept during the service, but these were tears of healing and consolation; she kissed the holy portrait, and felt so much better that immediately afterwards she was able to swallow some water, and then took medicine and food. Katerina Borisovna Tschitschagov and Katerina Alexeievna Tscheprunovna remained with their friend, who was very soon quite out of danger. The racked heart of Alexei Stepanovitsch at last was eased. The physicians worked with fresh ardour for her complete recovery, which, however, presented peculiar difficulties and dangers, as the learned trio really took the condition of their patient too seriously. owing to their great personal regard for her. This one feared consumption, that meningitis, and the third dreaded the possibility of an aneurism. Luckily, all three were of one mind in recommending a stay in the country, where the patient would be able to enjoy forest air and take a koumis cure at the same time. It was now the beginning of June, the herbage was in full luxuriance, and the mares' milk had not yet lost its spring-time, health-restoring properties.

Stepan Michailovitsch received the news of his grand-daughter's death with apparent indifference; and remarked that it was foolish to make so much ado over the loss of a girl, as they were always plentiful enough. But shortly afterwards, when news was brought of Sofia Nikolaievna's dangerous condition, the old man was seriously disturbed and uneasy. When the third despatch arrived, stating that the patient was out of danger but very weak, and that the doctors had decided that the only hope for her lay in a koumis cure, Stepan Michailovitsch flew in a great rage, and denounced the doctors as persecutors of mankind, who knew nothing and strove to pollute human souls by persuading folks to swallow heathenish drinks. "If it is forbidden by orthodoxy to eat horse-flesh," said he, "it seems it's no sin to drink the milk

of the unclean beast! I see what will happen," he continued, as he heaved a deep sigh, "it's possible that my daughter-in-law may survive the stuff; but she will never be healthy again, nor have any more children!" Stepan Michailovitsch was very much upset, and remained in a very depressed state of mind for a long time.

Nine-and-twenty versts South-West of Ufa. on the road to Kazan, the little Tartar village of Usytamak (or Alkino, as the Russians are accustomed to call it, after the name of its owner) is situated where the little Usa flows into the superb Djonia, all surrounded by magnificent forests. The huts are clustered together in picturesque confusion in a luxuriant valley, and creep up the slopes of the Bairam-Tau, which shelters them from the North wind. To the West rises another mountain, the Sein-Tau. 1 To the South-East the rivulet of the Usa meanders, bordered by shady groves, through the blossoming meadows full of fragrant and succulent. herbage. The mighty forests of oak, lime, elm, maple, and other trees of richest foliage waft refreshing purity and vivifying perfume on every breeze that blows. To this enchanting spot Alexei Stepanovitsch brought his feeble. emaciated, faded wife, who looked like a shadow of her former self: the devoted Avenarius accompanied them. The patient had been greatly fatigued by the short journey. The hospitable head of the village received the new-comers in the friendliest manner; his house was a good-sized one with out-buildings. Sofia Nikolaievna however preferred not to live in this house, and chose one of the adjoining buildings. The head man's family were so profuse in their attentions and so pressing in their hospitality, that the doctor deemed

¹ Tau means mountain, Bairam feast or festival. This name, according to the legend, was given to the mountain, because it was here the Bashkirs used to hold their solemn festival of prayer which concludes the *Urasa*, or fast. Sein-Tau means the mountain of the Assembly. The word Sein signifies a gathering or feast of the community, on which occasions races and various sports used to take place. The mountain was called by this name on the occasion when it was sold by the Bashkirs on the banks of the Usa to its purchaser Alkin. As soon as the bargain had been concluded, Monsieur Alkin gave a magnificent banquet to the Bashkirs upon the mountain side. Tamak means mouth: hence the village at the mouth of the Usa, where it joins the Djoma, is called Usytamak. What the words Usa and the hereaftermentioned river named Kurkal-Dauk signify, I have not been able to ascertain.

it necessary to keep his patient somewhat apart, so as to escape their friendly importunities. These good folks were Mahometans, speaking very fair Russian. Their mode of existence was a quaint mingling of Tartar and Russian habits and customs; but koumis was their universal beverage from morning to night. This wholesome drink was prepared for Sofia Nikolaievna after a somewhat more dainty fashion than that employed by the natives. Hers was not fermented in the usual dirty horse-skin bag, but in a nice new little barrel made of linden wood. The Alkins declared that koumis made in that barrel would be less efficacious, and would not taste nearly so good; but the patient had such a strong objection to the bag of raw horse hide that they agreed to prepare the beneficial drink for her in her own clean way. The doctor gave the necessary directions for the carrying-out of the cure, and returned to Ufa; Alexei Stepanovitsch however, as well as Parascha and Annuschka, remained with the invalid. The fresh air, the koumis, at first only taken in small quantities, the daily expeditions taken with Alexei Stepanovitsch through the magnificent forests in the neighbourhood, on which occasions Yefrem, who had grown to be a great favourite of Sofia Nikolaievna, drove them: the charming solitude of the woods, where the patient reposed for hours, lying on a leathern mattress, her head supported by pillows breathing the aromatic breeze, while she listened to some simple tale being read aloud or drifted into a sweet slumber; all this produced the most pleasing results, and at the end of a fortnight Sofia Nikolaievna quitted her couch, and even attempted little walks. Her doctor paid her a visit, was delighted at the excellent effects of the cure, increased the doses of koumis; and, as his patient was, at that period, unable to take the increased amount of the milk, he said she must take more exercise, and suggested This sort of exercise was at that time unheard-of among the Russian aristocracy. Alexei Stepanovitsch disliked the idea very much; and Sofia Nikolaievna herself did not think it seemly. In vain did the daughters of the house set her an example, by scouring the enchanting district for miles around, mounted on their Bashkirian steeds. For long enough Sofia Nikolaievna resisted all entreaties, even her husband's, to whom the doctor had confided the urgent

necessity for this sort of exercise. But the Tschitschgovs came on a visit to Alkino, and so it happened that Sofia Nikolaievna found it impossible to withstand the united solicitations of her friends. Her consent indeed was largely influenced by the self-sacrificing example of Katerina Borisovna Tschitschagova, who, like the true friend she was, conquered her own prejudices and took to riding, at first alone, but soon accompanied by her convalescent friend. This exhilarating motion was followed by a fresh command, to wit the daily consumption of fat mutton, which Sofia Nikolaievna disliked very much indeed. Evidently Avenarius was modelling his cure on the daily life and diet of the Bashkirs who, during the koumis season, exist exclusively on fat mutton, which they eat without any accompaniment of bread or vegetables; from early till late they ride far and near across the wide steppes, leading this life from the days when the heath grass displays its earliest green, and only quitting the plains when its slender feathery tufts are glistening in silvery autumnal waves. The cure continued to work well, and the riders were joined by the sons and daughters of the owner of the land, and became quite a cavalcade. Frequently they made excursions to the potash works, which were situated in the middle of the forest, two versts from Alkino beside the pretty little stream of the Kurkul-Dauk, 1 Sofia Nikolaievna observed the iron cauldrons full of boiling potash, the wooden tubs in which the crude crystals were congealing, and the smelting-ovens from which the potash finally issued in the form of a white porous salt, with great interest. She was particularly pleased with the nimble and dexterous Tartar labourers, so active in their pointed caps and their long smocks which in no way impeded their movements. hospitable proprietors of the works spared no efforts to entertain their visitors with all sorts of pleasant diversions.

¹This manufactory was closed in 1848. In the year 1791 the preparation of potash was not very general in the Province of Ufa. Later it caused the destruction of a gigantic number of trees of the greatest beauty. Huge forests of limes, elms, and maples were felled. These species of trees grew in such abundance in this district at the time of which we write that at first they were utilised solely for the production of potash, as their ashes are specially rich in this alkali. In those days the potash industry was the principal business in the district which we have striven to pourtray for the reader.

Having this end in view, they arranged native dances, races and wrestling matches among their Mahommedan retainers.

At first Alexei Stepanovitsch took part in all these jaunts and merry makings; but as he observed that his wife's health improved daily and that she had plenty of company and distraction, he began to enjoy these delicious hours of freedom in his own way. This rural life, the beautiful weather, and the irresistible charm of Nature roused all his old fancies: prepared his fishing tackle and set to work to try to beguile the wary trout from his watery abode in the plentiful and clear mountain streams of the Alkino district: frequently snared quails with nets. Feodor Michevey Parascha's young husband, assisted him in this latter sport, being an adept at it, besides being most skilful with the birdcall. Amateurs of other varieties of sport regard this sort of fowling with the utmost disdain. I must confess that I see no reason for this scorn. To lie in the scented meadow grass, the net extended before you over the lofty blades, mimicking upon your pipe the sweet, melodious cry of the little lady quail; to listen for the reply of the misguided little lovers; to watch them arrive from every side, flying and fluttering in the greatest haste; to observe their amusing antics, and finally the excitement of dropping the net over the lucky or unlucky capture: all this, I confess, afforded me great pleasure in my early days, and the recollection of it is still delightful. Sofia Nikolaievna, however, saw nothing attractive in such occupations. Meantime, her condition improved visibly, and at the end of two months her face had filled out and a fresh colour bloomed in her cheeks.

Avenarius came to Alkino for the third time, and was delighted at his patient's good progress. He was proud, and justly so, of the result of his cure. He was the first to recommend koumis, and had laid down all the rules for the application of the remedy. He had always been very fond of his patient, but after succeeding in restoring her to health and strength, he felt the love of a father towards her.

Each week Alexei Stepanovitsch sent his father a detailed account of the state of Sofia Nikolaievna's health. Stepan Michailovitsch was overjoyed on hearing of his daughter-in-law's recovery (naturally, he utterly refused to believe that it

was in any way due to the koumis) and was very much horrified on hearing about the riding, which little secret his son had inadvertently betrayed in one of his letters. The family did not fail to use this favourable opportunity to the best advantage, and by their skilful manipulation of hints and pointed innuendoes, they worked up the old man into such a temper that he sent a very surly letter to Alexei Stepanovitsch, which wounded Sofia Nikolaievna's feelings deeply. But as soon as her health was fully restored and her former bloom and beauty returned, his first delightful hopes filled the old gentleman's head and he ceased abusing the koumis and the riding on horseback.

It was autumn when the young pair returned to Ufa. Old Subin was in a hopeless condition, and the marvellous recovery of his daughter made not the slightest impression on him. For him all earthly things were at an end, all cords were loosened, all threads severed that had attached him to life. His soul barely tarried in its fragile prison. The further development of the conjugal life of the young Bagrovs had been entirely interrupted by the manifold events just chronicled: first by the birth of the baby daughter, and the boundless and passionate love bestowed upon the child by her mother: then by the death of the little one, which had reduced the mother to the verge of insanity and nearly killed her: and finally by the long cure and the life in the Tartar village. During the period of her agony of mind and bodily suffering. Alexei Stepanovitsch had devoted himself to his wife in the most loving and self-sacrificing way. There had been no opening or occasion for any collision between these two most opposite characters. When life's capital is being spent, who pays heed to the petty cash? Times of great anxiety and cases of especial significance are only paid for in great sums; while the trivial round of daily life costs but little. Alexei Stepanovitsch had large reserves of capital. but very little small change. When a man is confronted with peculiar danger or sorrow, such as when the life and well-being of an adored wife are threatened, he suffers in the depths of his soul—he denies himself sleep, rest, nourishment; he forgets himself entirely; and, with quivering nerves and exalted soul lives but for another. At such times life has

no room to spare for little airs and graces. But the time of portentous events passes, life resumes its old placid track: the mind is at rest, the nerves relaxed; common affairs regain their ancient and dreary supremacy; old habits reassert themselves—and now is the time for the little things at which we have hinted—the time for trifling attentions and kindnesses, for complaisance and vielding, and the thousand insignificant and trifling actions which unite to make up our daily life. The periods of trial, of lofty self-sacrifice, and of supreme self-denial are but rare-between them Life perpetually flows in its daily channel: and these trifles lend it. peace, joy, and charm; in short, all that we call happiness, And so it came about that, as Sofia Nikolajevna grew strong and well and Alexei Stepanovitsch ceased to feel any anxiety for her life and health, gradually the old claims and pretensions of the one and the inability of the other to satisfy these claims, revived anew. Tender reproaches and exhortations bored the husband: his awe of solemn and serious interviews was rapidly vanishing: with his awe, his complete and unreserved candour disappeared; and the loss of candour in marriage, especially in that partner who is inferior in strength of character, infallibly leads to the wrecking of wedded happiness. The return to Ufa, to an idle, monotonous life in a city would probably have produced the inevitable discord. sooner, had it not happened that the painful condition of Sofia Nikolaievna's father, who was now actually face-to-face with death, absorbed all her attention and demanded her filial love to the complete exclusion of any other feeling. circumstance caused a further postponement in the evolution of her home relations with her husband, while she remained day and night in her father's house. The Kalmuck continued to nurse his sick master with the utmost devotion and skill, and with untiring constancy. He was most careful to keep out of the daughter's way, although he had plenty of opportunity for annoyance, unchecked and unchallenged. Nikolaievna was conciliated by this behaviour. She summoned the man and made up her quarrel with him, and thereafter permitted him to assist her to attend to her dying father. In spite of his apparent detachment from all that took place around him, Nikolai Feodorovitsch observed his

daughter's action, and tried to press her hand, while he whispered almost inaudibly: "Thank you!" From this instant Sofia Nikolaievna never quitted her father.

I think I have already told you that the joyous hopes of vore had bloomed anew in Stepan Michailovitsch's head in consequence of the welcome news of his daughter-in-law's restoraation to good health. Nor were his hopes disappointed: very shortly afterwards he received a letter from Sofia Nikolaievna herself, in which she announced that, God willing, she hoped soon to present him with a grandson to console his old age. In the first moments Stepan Michailovitsch was transported with joy, but soon composed himself and would not betray any of his hopes before his family. Perhaps he feared that Sofia Nikolaievna would produce another daughter, or possibly that the newcomer might likewise succumb to the united coddling and physicking of the mother and doctor. Probably, however, he was only acting as many others do, when they persist in prophesying evil in order to provoke Fate into bringing about the exact opposite, and it may well be doubted if Stepan Michailovitsch was really so cold and incredulous as he pretended. Said he: "This time no one shall have the better of me: I will not again give credence to the statement. or rejoice over it as if it had really come to pass!" The family were greatly astonished at such an attitude, but made no comment on it. But the old man secretly believed that a grandson would be born after all, and once more ordered Father Vasili to offer up prayers "for the health of the pregnant handmaiden of God, Sofia": fetched the banished family-tree from its retirement, and kept it in his own room.

Meanwhile Nikolai Feodorovitsch's last hour was slowly approaching. After so many years of intense suffering, the conclusion of such a miserable and unhappy existence (which, so to speak, was only unnatural in such a shattered body) could not really cause anyone any grief. For her part, Sofia Nikolaievna prayed Heaven for an easy and peaceful death for her father. Calmly and peacefully, even joyfully, the sick man expired. In the act of death a bright smile played on his features and, in spite of the closed eyes, the rigid corpse long preserved this expression. The funeral ceremony was solemn and pompous. In earlier days old Subin had been a

great favourite in the town, but his public services had gradually been forgotten; even compassion for his long martyrdom had to a certain extent grown blunted. But as soon as the news of his death spread through the city, the ancient regard for him was revived in all hearts, mingled with pity for his recent great sufferings. Every house was empty, and the entire population of Ufa thronged the pavement between the Church of the Assumption and the cemetery, on the day of the funeral. Peace to thine ashes, worthy man! To human weakness thou didst unite human kindness!

After Nikolai Feodorovitsch's death two trusteeships were formed for the children of his two marriages. Alexei Stepanovitsch was oppointed trustee for Sofia Nikolaievna's brothers by the same mother. These youths had both been obliged to enter a regiment of Guards in Petersburg, before either of them had completed his studies at the school for the nobility at Moscow. I have omitted to mention the fact that shortly before the death of his father-in-law, the latter had used his interest to get Alexei Stepanovitsch appointed a State Agent of the General Court.

Long did Sofia Nikolaievna weep and lament, and Alexei Stepanovitsch wept and lamented with her: but these were quiet tears and quiet prayers which did not affect Sofia Nikolaievna's barely-restored health. Obedient to the wishes of her husband, the advice of her friends, especially that of the prudent Avenarius, she was careful to avoid all agitation and gave all needful heed to her situation. It had been made quite clear to her that the well-being, nay the life, of the coming child depended upon her own health and peace of mind. Bitter experience confirmed this declaration of friends and physicians: and the young wife was quite resolved to act as she was advised in every particular. To a letter from her father-in-law, in which he expressed his sympathy for his daughter-in-law in her bereavement in his plain way and farther expressed his fear lest her health should suffer thereby, she sent a most reassuring reply; and indeed she strove most earnestly to keep her mind and body in health and repose. The arrangement of the young pair's daily life was at once regular and full of variety. Avenarius and Klauss (the latter also was an intimate friend of the Bagrovs) had ordered Sofia

Nikelaievna to take a daily drive or preferably a walk. Each evening a little party of affectionate friends either met at the Bagrovs' house, or the young pair visited one or other of these, most frequently going to the Tschitschagovs'. Madame Katerina Borisovna Tschitschagov's brothers had grown very friendly with Alexei Stepanovitsch and his wife, especially the younger one. D. B. Mertvago, who had requested the honour, in advance, of standing godfather to the expected child. Both brothers were frequent visitors at the house in Golubinava Street and were quite at home there. They were young men of the highest integrity, and highly educated according to the standard of those times. The favourite evening's entertainment at the Bagrov parties was for one of the company to read aloud. But as one cannot read aloud, nor even listen, for ever, Sofia Nikolaievna was instructed in the art and craft of card-playing. This task was undertaken by Klauss, and each time that the Bagrovs were at home of an evening, he found means to arrange a game of cards. Avenarius took no share in this diversion, for all his life long he never could distinguish between an ace and a five.

An early and profusely-blossoming spring had followed the winter, the ice of the Bielaia had suddenly broken, and the waters spread over the plain for a stretch of seven versts. The beauty of the noble scene could be fully enjoyed from the windows of the little house in Golubinaya Street. The fruit trees planted round the house were in leaf and bloom. The sweet fragrance of apple and cherry blossom filled the air. The drawing-room was exchanged for the garden, and the lifegiving warmth invigorated and refreshed Sofia Nikolaievna still more.

About this period an event happened in Ufa which completely absorbed the attention of all the inhabitants, and in which the young Bagrovs took an especial interest, as the hero of the adventure was one of their intimate friends, and indeed, if I make no mistake, a distant relative of Alexei Stepanovitsch. Sofia Nikolaievna, by reason of her imaginative temperament, was especially enchanted by the romantic occurrence which I will proceed to relate. A young man, a member of one of the richest and most aristocratic families of the Province of Ufa or Orenburg, R. I. Timaschev,

fell in love with a beautiful Tartar girl, the daughter of the wealthy chief, Tevkeley. Like the Alkins, this family had adopted an external European culture and spoke good Russian, but retained the strictest Mahommedan faith. The fair Salmé did not fail to return the passion of the young Russian, who, at that time, was a captain in a regiment stationed in Ufa. It was quite hopeless to dream of ever gaining the consent of the father and the elder brothers to the marriage, as Salmé, in order to marry a Christian, would be compelled to embrace the Christian Faith. The girl fought against her love, which burns with a fiercer flame in the hearts of Asiatics than in the breasts of our colder European women. At length, however, as was to be expected. Mahomet was conquered, and Salmé resolved to fly with her beloved captain, to receive baptism and to be married to him. commander of the regiment, the charming and universally beloved Major General Mansurov, who was later to distinguish himself under Suvorov in the Alps at the passage of the Devil's Bridge, and who himself had married for love a short time previously, was made a party to the captain's adventure and promised his protection. On a dark and stormy night Salmé quitted her father's house: in the forest close at hand Timaschev was awaiting her with horses: it was necessary to cover the hundred versts to Ufa with the utmost speed. Salmé was a superb horsewoman: at distances of ten to fifteen versts fresh horses were stationed, in the charge of soldiers who were devoted to the service of their captain, and away flew the fugitives "on the wings of love" as any poet of the The attachment day would inevitably have remarked. existing between Salmé and Timaschev had long been suspected in the Tevkelev family and a strict watch had been kept on the girl, whose absence was very soon noted. It only took a few moments to summon a large troop of fully-armed Tartars, who, infuriated with rage and led by the injured father, 1 pursued the lovers with howls of wrath. It was easy to guess in which direction the pair had fled. Most assuredly they would never have escaped; or, at the least, a bloody combat would have been fought between the numerous

¹ Another account of the affair states that it was the girl's mother, who, escorted by her sons, rode in pursuit of her eloping daughter.

soldiers and officers who were stationed along the route (all of whom took the warmest interest in the affair) and the pursuing horde had not someone had the presence of mind to destroy the bridge over a deep and dangerous mountain stream after the passage of the fugitives. The pursuers had to swim across the torrent at the risk of their lives, which involved the loss of two hours' time. Even with this delay. the barque, which was conveying Timaschev and his Salmé across the Bielaia to Ufa, had barely reached the middle of the stream, when old Teykeley with his sons and the half of his faithful retainers (the other half had ridden their horses to death), appeared on the river bank. But by some extraordinary accident, every available boat, raft, or shallop was filled by parties of soldiers who were anxious to reach the city. The disappointed father, gnashing his teeth with rage, shrieked curses after his daughter, and turning his horse, rode away from the river. Half-dead with fright and fatigue. Salmé was assisted into a carriage on landing and taken to the house of Timaschev's mother. The matter assumed a strictly legal and formal aspect: a Mahommedan had renounced her faith and, of free will, desired to receive Christian Baptism. Accordingly, she was placed under the protection of the city magistracy, while all the circumstances of the case were placed before the resident Mutti in Ufa (whom the Russians called the Tartar bishop) who was then requested to prohibit the Tevkelev family—as well as any other Mahommedan whatsoever—from making any attempt to hinder the maiden Salmé from "voluntarily" embracing the Christian religion. In a very few days the clergy had prepared the neophyte for receiving Holy Baptism and Sacred Unction. These ceremonies were performed with the utmost pomp in the Cathedral. Salmé received the Christian name of Serafima, with the addition of Ivanovna (after that of her godfather) and she and Timaschev were married before quitting the Church. whole city took a great and sympathetic interest in the extraordinary event. Of course the young men-and every man in the place for the matter of that—were great partisans of the beautiful bride; but the ladies, many of whom had had their own secret hopes sadly dashed by the occurrence, blamed and criticised Salmé's conduct. However there remained a fair number who extended the hand of friendship to the convert, who by her marriage had gained the right of entry to the most aristocratic circles of Ufa society. To this latter party belonged Sofia Nikolaievna and her husband, who made the most friendly advances to the newly-married pair. With the assistance of the young and amiable wife of the general, Madame A. N. Mansurova, the friends of the young folks were able to place them on a secure and honoured footing The ladies took the utmost pains to impart the culture lacking to the captain's young wife, who shewed herself such an apt pupil that she very soon took her place as a most graceful and interesting woman of the highest fashion, causing no little sensation and envy, to which her uncommon beauty and unusual situation contributed in a great measure. Nikolaievna remained a firm friend of Serafima Ivanovna until the latter's death, which, unhappily, occurred very shortly. Three years after her marriage she died of consumption, leaving two baby sons and an inconsolable husband to mourn her loss. Timaschev nearly went mad with grief, quitted the army, lived only for his children, and never married again. It was said at the time, and I repeat it for what it is worth, that the young wife wasted away with longing for her forsaken family and with remorse for denying her former religion.

Meanwhile time jogged steadily along, quite undeterred by all these remarkable happenings. Already Sofia Nikolaievna had ceased to visit her friends; even her daily drives were forbidden. On fine days she walked for half-an-hour in her garden; when it rained she walked backwards and forwards in a room where the windows stood open. Really, all this fuss and formality and strict rule was quite unnecessary, and likely to cause as much harm as good; all the same Sofia Nikolaievna continued in most excellent health. Stepanovitsch was compelled to defer to all the strict instructions of the medical men, as his father was continually writing letters telling him to cherish his wife as the very apple of his eye. All the family friends, the Tschitschagovs and the Mertvagos-to say nothing of the doctors who were so devoted to their patient-watched and tended Sofia Nikolaievna with such care and solicitude that she could not

walk a step or eat a mouthful or even drink a drop of water without their special permission. Avenarius had been called away from Ufa on business, so Klauss, who at that time was settled in Ufa as an accoucheur, took over all responsibility for Sofia Nikolaievna's health. Klauss was a worthy, skilful, highly-educated, but very absurd-looking German. Although by no means an old man, he invariably wore a bright vellow wig. It was a mystery where he had discovered a peruke of such an uncommon hue. His evebrows and the pupils of his little eves were equally of a yellow tinge, whereas his face was of a permanent glowing scarlet. 1 Many peculiarities marked his intercourse with his friends: for instance, he was very zealous in kissing the ladies' hands, but had the utmost objection to being kissed on the cheek in return, vowing that it was very impolite on the part of a man to permit this salute. He was exceedingly fond of small children; his way of shewing his affection to them was quaint. He would take a child in his lap, and holding its little fingers in his left hand, would caress it for hours with his right. But the word "savage" expressed the very fullness of his love. Sofia Nikolaievna, whom he adored, was always his "savage." As an intimate friend of the Bagrovs, Klauss had heard a great deal about Stepan Michailovitsch, and could well realise the old man's passionate desire and burning impatience to have a grandson. could write very good Russian, and wrote a letter to the expectant grandfather in legible script, in which he calculated Sofia Nikolaievna would most certainly bear a son between the 13th and 22nd September. This prophecy was forwarded to Stepan Michailovitsch, who remarked: "The German is a liar!" while secretly believing every word of the letter. After this, a carefully-restrained but joyous expectation lurked in every word and action. About this time it happened that our old acquaintance Afrosinia Andreievna-from whom he had never tried to conceal his apprehension lest Sofia Nikolaievna should again produce a daughter-related the following history to him: While staying in Moscow, she had once visited

¹ The same year, (1701), Andrei Michailovitsch Klauss migrated to Moscow, where he was installed as Professor of Midwifery at the Foundling Hospital. For a period of thirty years he remained stedfastly at his post, dying in 1821. The yellow wig remained his invariable head-covering. He was a keen and learned numismatist.

the Troizko Convent to pray to the blessed St. Sergei, and there had encountered an aristocratic lady, who for many years had only had daughters. This lady had vowed that, in the event of her bearing a son, he should receive the name of Sergei. It came to pass that the following year this lady had a son who was duly baptised Sergei in fulfilment of her yow . . . Stepan Michailovitsch listened to the tale in silence. But by the first post he wrote himself to his son and daughterin-law, telling them to have a mass said in honour of the blessed St. Sergei, the Worker of Miracles; and they must both vow that if a son should be born, his name should be Sergei. In order to attribute some motive or other to the command, he added that, so far, there had never been a Sergei in the Bagrov family. The request was strictly carried Sofia Nikolajevna was feverishly active providing all that a thoughtful mother deems necessary for the welfare and comfort of her expected child. The most important item of all. namely an excellent foster-mother, had been most fortunately secured. She was a peasant from the Subins' village of Kasimovka, who fulfilled all the necessary conditions which are most to be desired on these occasions; who was only too overjoyed to accept her mistress's charge, and who had already arrived in Ufa with her young baby.

The great moment drew near. Sofia Nikolaievna was now forbidden to leave her bed. Katerina Borisovna Tschitschagova was ill and unable to go out, and less intimate friends were not received. Katerina Alexeievna Tscheprunova was continually beside her beloved cousin and only left her at rare intervals to attend to her darling Andryscha. Klauss came to breakfast every morning, returning at six o'clock in the evening, when he would drink his tea and rum and play a hand at cards with his friends; and as the stakes were of trifling value, the frugal German used to bring worn-out cards with him. It was a mystery to all where he bought them. Frequently card-playing was varied by reading aloud, which Klauss enjoyed equally. The reader was always Alexei Stepanovitsch, who through constant practice read exceedingly well. Now and again the doctor brought a German book with him which he read aloud and translated into Russian at the same time. The young pair enjoyed this very much, especially

Sofia Nikolaievna, who was very anxious to become acquainted with German literature.

Ever since she had experienced that boundless mother's love, to which no other love can ever be compared, Sofia Nikolaievna had contemplated her condition with feelings of the most earnest awe. She held it a sacred duty to keep her mind in serenity and composure, so as to ensure the welfare and safety of her babe and to attain her object this object on which all her hopes, her whole future, her very life itself were centred. We already know enough of Sofia Nikolaievna not to feel any astonishment at beholding her so utterly abandoned to and overwhelmed by the love of an as yet unborn child. The preservation of this child by her own self-sacrifice was her sole care, day and night. She fixed her whole mind on this one object with the most earnest attention. caring for nothing else, and even appeared perfectly satisfied with Alexei Stepanovitsch, although the latter gave her plenty of grounds for annoyance. The more Alexei Stepanovitsch learnt about his wife's character, the less comprehensible she appeared to him. The very least matter of which he was capable was the comprehension of enthusiasm-with the exception perhaps of joining in it himself. This enthusiastic maternal instinct of Sofia Nikolaievna caused him quite as much perplexity and alarm as his father's fits of passion. Enthusiasm is invariably objectionable to calm, gentle, phlegmatic dispositions; they find such moods unnatural, and they look upon enthusiasts as people of disordered mind and subject to fits of eccentricity. They have no faith in anyone's balance, if it can be upset at any moment by a sudden shock. and are afraid of such people. There is no sentiment in life so fatal to love, even love for father or mother, as that of fear. And so it happened that instead of any progress being made in the strengthening of their relations or in harmony of feeling between the husband and wife, as might well have been hoped. they were growing still farther apart. This may sound strange; it happens, however, far too frequently in this world.

Just at this time Klauss received his Moscow appointment. He had already taken leave of his superiors, said good-bye to all his friends, and was only awaiting Sofia Nikolaievna's accouchement, in the event of his advice and assistance

being needed. Firmly convinced that the confinement would take place on the fifteenth, or on one or other of the two following days, he had bespoken his post-horses. He was unable to travel by the diligence, as he had arranged to quit the main road and travel to the remotely-situated estate of a German friend of his whom he was going to visit. The fifteenth of September came, but passed without any of the expected symptoms occurring. Sofia Nikolaievna was surprisingly well and cheerful, and only the doctor's silly orders prevented her getting up. The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth of September all passed in like manner; and, for all his attachment to Sofia Nikolaievna, the doctor began to be very seriously annoyed, because he was obliged to pay the driver a rouble a day while waiting, which in those days was a considerable sum. But in spite of his impatience, the worthy Klauss was as fond as ever of his young friends, and came every evening as usual to play cards, or listen to Alexei Stepanovitsch's reading. When the German won some sixty copecks he was delighted, and declared that the driver had not cost him quite so much that day. And so passed the nineteenth of September. Early on the morning of the twentieth, Klauss came to see Sofia Nikolaievna and was received very politely by her as he entered the door. The German was very cross indeed: "How long are you going to take advantage of me like this, you little savage?" he asked. kissing her hands as usual. "Yes, Alexei Stepanovitsch," he went on, turning to her husband, "your wife has made up her mind to ruin me. She ought to have had this baby on the fifteenth, and here she is on the twentieth making curtsevs!" "Oh, let it rest!" replied Alexei Stepanovitsch clapping him on the shoulder, "come along to-night and win some money from us; the cards are getting quite worn out." Klauss promised to come and bring some new cards. He then had breakfast and remained with the Bagrovs until two o'clock Punctually at six o'clock the honest German was standing at the door of the well-known little house in Golubinaya Street: as he found no one in the ante-room, dining or drawing rooms, he betook himself to the bedroom, whose door he found closed. He knocked, and Katerina Alexeievna opened the door. Andrei Michailovitsch walked in, and then

paused in amazement: a rich carpet was spread on the floor. the window was hung with green silk curtains, and at the head of the wide bed was a beautiful tester of the same stuff. In a corner of the room a light was burning behind a screen. Lying upon the bed, supported by pillows covered with beautifully-embroidered slips, and clad in a charming dressing gown, was Sofia Nikolaievna: her face was fresh and rosy, and her eves sparkled with joy. "Congratulate me, best of friends!" said she in an earnest, thrilling voice; "I am once more a mother, and have a son!" The doctor, observing Sofia Nikolaievna's rosy cheeks and hearing her clear voice, thought the whole thing was a joke: "Don't try to make fun of me, Barbarian, I am an old slyboots and not so easily deceived." he replied, smiling. "Get up. I have brought some new cards." And as he approached the bed and she remained lying on the pillows, he added: "This is my present for baby!" "Dear friend," replied Sofia Nikolaievna, "before Heaven, this is not a joke. Here is my son!" And in fact there lay the new-born babe on a large pillow, covered with a counterpane of pink satin, a sound, healthy, strong boy: while near the bed stood the midwife. Aliona Maximovna. In an access of comical rage Klauss bounced backwards as if he had been burnt. "What?" he roared, wrathfully, "without my assistance? Here I have been waiting a whole week and paying away my money, and you never even sent word to me!" His red face grew positively purple, his vellow wig was all awry, and his whole fat, little figure was so droll that the young mother could not help laughing. "Little father Andrei Michailovitsch," pleaded the midwife. "it happened so quickly that we lost our heads in the excitement. When we remembered you, Sofia Nikolaievna said it was no use sending as you would be here almost directly." But this faithful friend of the Bagrovs had recovered his temper. His fit of irritation had passed and tears of joy glittered in his eyes. With a practised hand he lifted the little boy from the bed, examined him by the light of the taper, pinched him in every limb until the child screamed again, put his finger in the little mouth, and, as the baby began to suck with the greatest vigour, shouted delightedly: "Oh, the young savage! How strong and sound he is!" Sofia.

Nikolaievna was terrified at the way in which Klauss was pulling her heart's delight about, while the midwife feared lest the German should bewitch the little one by the Evil Eye, 1 and wished to take the child away from him. Klauss was not going to give him up; he sprang about the room, holding the child in his arms, then asked for a basin. sponge, soap, warm water, and a swaddling band: stripped the poor baby again, tied an apron round his own waist, threw the wig into a corner of the room, and set to work to wash the child himself, while he chattered away: "Aha, you little savage, you don't scream now! You like this warm water! " At last Alexei Stepanovitsch arrived in a state of joy bordering on lunacy: he had just sent an express messenger to Bagrovo with a letter which he himself had written to his parents, as well as one to Aksinia Stepanovna begging her to come as quickly as she could and stand sponsor for the child. Alexei Stepanovitsch nearly suffocated the still damp doctor with his embraces: he had already kissed everyone in the house nearly to death, and shed tears of joy with everyone. Sofia Nikolaievna . . . but I dare not attempt to portray what she felt. This was bliss and rapture such as she was to experience but rarely on earth, and then for how short a time!

The birth of the son roused such an extraordinary outburst of joy and excitement in the house that even the neighbours joined in it. The whole of the Bagrov servants, at first overcome by joy (and later by brandy) sang and danced in the courtyard. Even those who were ordinarily sober on this great occasion had drunk too deeply of the wine cup. Among these last must be included Yefrem Yevseyitsch, who could hardly be kept under control. He wanted to force his way into the mistress's room to have a look at the child. At length his wife, assisted by the handy Parascha, tied him down on a hard bench. But even on this uneasy couch he continued to wave his legs about as if dancing, and snap his fingers, as with a stammering tongue he tried to sing "Eia popeia!"

Andrei Michailovitsch Klauss, fairly worn out by his own joyous excitement and by his zealous attentions upon the

¹ The Russians hold the belief that people who possess the Evil Eye injure children by their praise and admiration of them. [Tr. S.R.]

little one, had at last thrown himself into an armchair and sat sipping his tea with great enjoyment. This evening the soothing beverage was laced with such a mighty charge of rum that he became somewhat dizzv after his third cup. He forbade the child being suckled before morning, ordered him a little dose of rhubarb syrup, took leave of his happy friends, kissing the diminutive hand of the new-comer, and betook himself to his own house to rest himself, after promising to call early the next morning for a farewell visit to his patient. As he crossed the courtvard, he saw the servants dancing merrily, and heard the songs which resounded from the windows of kitchen and hall. He paused, and while he regretted being compelled to check the rejoicings of the good souls, he advised them to put a stop to the revels, as the noise was likely to prevent their mistress getting any sleep. To his astonishment, he was instantly obeyed, the merry company became silent, and dispersed. As he stepped out of the gate, the German murmured to himself: "A fortunate child! How they all rejoice over him!"

Ah, yes, this little boy was indeed born under the happiest of circumstances! His mother, who had suffered every moment throughout her first pregnancy, had enjoyed the best of health while he was yet unborn; no domestic differences had disturbed her peace of mind during this period; she had found a foster-mother, who proved herself capable of more self-sacrifice and true affection than many a mother. Much desired, longed-for, and besought from Heaven, this child came into the world, filling not only the hearts of his parents—but the hearts of all around him—with supremest joy: even that autumnal day was as warm as midsummer!

And what happened at Bagrovo, when the joyful news arrived that God had given a son and heir to Alexei Stepanovitsch? Now this had been the plan at Bagrovo: ever since the fifteenth of September Stepan Michailovitsch had counted the days and hours while awaiting the arrival of the messenger from Ufa, who had orders to be ready, day and night, with post horses. Such expense was an unheard-of thing in those days, and at any other time Stepan Michailovitsch would have considered it a waste of money and would have preferred employing his own horses. But now the importance and

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significance of the occasion quite overcame his economical scruples, and an exception was made. He had not long to wait. On the twenty-second of September, while he was taking his after-dinner nap, the messenger arrived with the glad tidings. Scarcely had the old man awakened from a deep sleep, and turned over with a yawn, than Masan burst into the room, and stammering with excitement, shouted: "I wish you joy of your grandson, little father Stepan Michailovitsch!" Stepan Michailovitsch's first act was to cross himself. Then he jumped nimbly out of bed, hurried with his bare feet to the old press, pulled out the familiar family tree, and seized a pen. From the circle which contained the name of Alexei he drew a perpendicular line, at the end of which he made another circle, and wrote within it:

SERGEI

BOOK TWO YEARS OF CHILDHOOD

SKETCH VI

THE DEATH OF STEPAN MICHAILOVITSCH

THE RETURN TO TOWN LIFE

We returned to Ufa. The two-months' stay at the Sergeievka estate, or more properly speaking in the halfcompleted little house beside the lake, the fresh air, freedom, fishing—which last had become a veritable passion with me, if one can describe a child's fancy thus—all this was so much more delightful than our life in the city, that I felt miserable in Ufa. I was burnt nearly as black as a Moor, and all our friends declared that I had grown into a regular little savage. I despised our town garden and refused to play in it, even with my dear little sister. In vain she begged me to run and jump with her, and called me to admire the beautiful flowers which filled the beds. I remained in a surly mood and solemnly explained to my little play-fellow that, after the oak trees, the plains, and the lake at Sergeievka, our bit of a garden with its miserable apple trees was not worth even a glance. If I did go out, it was only to play with Surka1. and pat and caress him: our life together in Sergeievka had made us great friends, and the sight of the dear dog, which reminded me of those blissful days, did my heart good. Meanwhile the dark hue of my complexion shewed no sign of fading. My mother employed all sorts of means to try and remove it, all of which were exceedingly irksome to me, and I submitted myself to her experiments very unwillingly. At first I could not resume my former occupations and games. they seemed too childish. Caligraphy only bored me, as I could make no real progress without someone to instruct me: even reading had lost its charm, as I had read and re-read all

A puppy dog that the boy had rescued and reared. [Tr. S.R.]

DEATH OF STEPAN MICHAILOVITSCH

my books so frequently that I knew a great part of them by heart. All the same, after a week of idleness I set to work writing copies at my parent's bidding, and took up my wellknown books with pleasure. S. I. Anitschkov 1 continued to take an interest in my work and progress. He invited me to his house again and put me through a little examination. which I passed successfully, greatly to his satisfaction. then presented me with such a number of books that my guardian Yevsevitsch had a job to carry them home. They were a complete little library in themselves. Amongst these books I discovered, the Rossiad of Cheraskov, the Old Russian Library, and Sumarokov's Works in twelve volumes. It was but natural to expect that the Old Russian Library was set on one side after I had taken a peep into its contents. but I devoured the Rossiad and Sumarokov's Works with the greatest eagerness and the utmost enthusiasm. Fired by the example of one of my uncles who declaimed poetry or, rather. recited it in a chanting tone, I did my best to initiate him. This sort of recitation appeared to give my mother and father much pleasure, for I was frequently bidden to recite verses before our visitors, who were not so plentiful with us as they had been during the past winter. My uncle had rejoined his regiment and many of our intimate friends were away from home. My mother was in much better health, received fewer invitations to visit friends, and was in consequence able to devote more of her time to me. My favourite occupation was to read aloud to her out of the Rossiad while she explained all the unintelligible expressions and situations to me. I read the poem with great delight, my imagination picturing my favourite heroes, Mstislavski, Prince Kurbski, and Palezki so vividly that they appeared to be veritable old friends. I was familiar with their every personal detail, I knew exactly what they looked like, and all about their past lives. I could give minute accounts of all that they did, both before and after their combats: how the Tsar summoned them to his councils and asked their advice; how he thanked them for their doughty deeds, and so forth. My mother used to laugh

An old neighbour who had made the boy gifts of books.

² A valuable collection of documents and chronicles compiled by N. I. Novikov. [Tr. S.R.]

at me; but my father was deeply impressed by my inventive faculty and once asked: "But how did you get to know all this? Is it nothing but lies?" My mother explained to him that there was no harm in it and these fancies would pass away with time. But she forbade me to entertain our guests with any more details of the private histories of Kurbski, Mstislavski or Palezki. How I revelled in the description of Prince Mstislavski:

"Not savage in the battle comparable alone
Was he unto some solid mass of hard and flinty stone,
Which, smitten, from its riven face emits a steady flow
Of burning sparks responsive to the iron's mighty blow."

Gidromir and Astalon were personal enemies of mine, and I never ceased deploring the fact that Gidromir was not killed in his hand-to-hand fight with Palezki. I had a special admiration for the Kazanian knight, of whom these lines were written:

"His dagger gripped between his teeth, his trusty sword in hand Which sparkled in the distance like a glimmering firebrand,

They fell upon our army, which fled in wild retreat. Like wild swans seeking shelter from the hailstorm and the sleet, Our warriors sought their citadel . . but this, too, might have been The prey of the grim conquerors, as I too truly ween But our Kurbski and Palezki sprang boldly to the fight, And our enemies were vanished by our heroes' gallant might."

I used to recite the two concluding verses with mingled joy and pride. I must confess that it gives me great pleasure to repeat these stanzas to-day, and I fancy that I can detect a peculiar and vehement ring in them. I lost no opportunity of exhibiting my declamatory talent before my indulgent patron, S. I. Anitschkov. He was delighted, and complimented me on my performance, promising to give me Lomonosov's works.

Life in the city and at home pursued its calm even tenor, when an event occurred, which, apart from its own peculiar significance, produced such stirring consequences that everyone without exception was affected thereby, and even I was forced to participate in the universal agitation. Upon a far from bright, but a hot day (it was a Sunday, or at any rate

a Saint's day) we were returning from hearing mass at the Church of the Assumption, and were just standing on the doorstep of our house, when a certain tumult or emotion was noticeable among the crowd of worshippers issuing from the church doors. Down the street came a Cossack government orderly at full gallop, and shouted to the congregation: "Back into the church with you and take the oath to the new Emperor!" The departing crowd halted, collected in groups, and re-entered the church: their numbers now greatly augmented by the addition of every passer-by. " The Empress is dead!" I heard one of the hurrying crowd exclaim, and at that very instant the majestic bell of the Cathedral began to toll, and was very soon followed by the bells of the ten city churches. My father and mother were much affected. My father began to weep, and my mother crossed herself and, with tears in her eves, said: "God grant her the Kingdom of Heaven!" I was greatly terrified without knowing in the least why. The whole of our servants had rushed in a body to the house door, every face expressed grief and dismay, and people in the street were crying. A clerk from the Supreme Court arrived, breathless with haste, and told my father he had been summoned to go instantly to the Cathedral to take the oath My father put on his uniform in all haste and of allegiance. set off. My mother led me and my little sister, who was quite bewildered, into her room, where she prayed; and then seating herself in an armchair, sank into a sorrowful reverie. I and my sister sat opposite, silently watching her face. At last my mother appeared to recollect our presence, and began to talk to us, or rather to me, for my sister was far too young to understand what her mother was talking about. Indeed very soon the little one jumped out of her chair and ran away to her nurse. Suiting her conversation to my childish intelligence, my mother explained to me that the Empress Katerina Alexievna¹ was a good and wise woman, who had reigned over us a long time and had stedfastly endeavoured to make all her subjects happy and to enable them all to have the opportunity of learning something; that she had always chosen wise councillors and brave generals, that during her reign no neighbouring countries

had dared to attack us, that our soldiers had always been victorious, and had gained great glory for us. Part of this I had already heard before, but now, for the first time, I realised what it all meant, and I felt much afflicted by the death of our Empress. "But who will be our Empress now?" I enquired. "Now we shall have an Emperor, her son, Pavel Petrovitsch,1" replied my mother. "And will he be a good and wise man?" "That will be as God wills: we shall all pray that it may be so," answered she. I was of opinion that God most certainly would make Pavel Petrovitsch a wise and kind Emperor. My mother made no reply, but bade me go into the nursery and read or play with my sister. But I wanted to know what the Empress's death had to do with the taking of the oath. My mother explained the meaning of this ceremony to me, and I declared my intention of taking the oath, too. "Children do not take oaths," said my mother; "now run away to your sister!" I felt much mortified.

My father soon returned home, accompanied by some friends. All were highly indignant over the behaviour of our Military Governor or Army Corps Commander (I really cannot recollect exactly what he was) one W---, who openly betrayed his joy at the death of the Empress. He had given orders to ring the bells during the whole day, and had invited all the town to a grand ball and supper in the evening. I was convinced in my own mind that W-was a villain. I gathered from the remarks made on this subject that he had especial reasons for being pleased, as the new Emperor was very favourably disposed towards him and he had every prospect of being promoted to a very high position. This prejudiced me still farther against W--. What right had he to be rejoicing over his own good fortune when everyone around him was in such distress? At first I heard my mother earnestly protesting against anyone accepting the Governor's invitation, and the others heartily agreeing with her. And then it was suddenly discovered that it would not do at all to stay away. My mother did not dispute the point, but repeated her resolve to stay at home herself. My father went to the ball, but returned home almost immediately, and said

¹ Paul (murdered) (Regnal years) 1796-1801. [Tr.]

the affair was more like a funeral ceremony, that the only cheerful countenances there belonged to W——, his two adjutants, and his friend, the former Deputy, Anitschkov, who could never forgive the late Empress for having dissolved the Assembly of Deputies when they were considering a new legislation, and who declared it was high time that the reins of government were in the hands of a man.

The events of the day had filled my head with a number of new and hitherto alien notions, and had awakened new sentiments in my heart. That evening when I lay down in my little bed, when the curtains were drawn around me and all was quiet in the room, my fancy set to work to portray the most portentous visions. In a church hung with black draperies and under a black baldachin (I had heard these things discussed) I beheld the dead Empress lying in state, while beside her knelt the new Emperor. Both figures were of colossal stature. The Emperor wept, and behind him, sobbing loudly, was the whole of the Russian people, in a great company which extended as far as the distance between Ufa and Subovka, that is to say, ten versts. The next morning I described the scene to the nurse, Parascha, and to my little sister, as if I had actually seen it.

The gossip about the death of the Empress did not last very long. Each day that passed, less was said or thought about the matter. It was discussed in my mother's bedroom and in the drawing room and even in our nursery—whither Annuschka, Yefrem's wife, and the hunchbacked Kalmuck Princess¹ soon found their way from the servants' quarters. In the bed-chamber and the salon the talk was all about the great changes which might be expected to take place very shortly, and of the probable early dismissal of the late Empress's favourites, as the Emperor detested his mother, recollecting her bad treatment of him in his youth. I very frequently heard the to-me-incomprehensible remark: "Now the folks at Gatschino² will have a good time!" In the

¹ A nickname given to one of the maidservants. [Tr. S.R.]

² The castle in which the Emperor Paul resided until his mother's death. Those who composed his Court there during the time when he was Crown Prince were treated with great favour when he became Emperor. [Tr. S.R.]

nursery we were treated to a resumé of all that was said in the maids' and men's apartments, where the sudden death of the Empress had aroused the gravest suspicions, and where all sorts of awful details had been manufactured which threw me into a state of nervous alarm. I went to my father and mother for fuller information concerning these "facts," and only their solemn and repeated asseveration that there was absolutely no truth in the fell rumours could set my mind at rest. I ran back to the nursery and tried my utmost to convince Parascha and her friends of the groundlessness of their stories, but it was all labour lost, I was told that I was young and could not be expected to understand such matters. This reply mortified and irritated me. I heard later that Parascha and the other maids had been strictly forbidden to repeat tales which were current among the people in the children's hearing.

For long enough we daily expected to hear that something important had happened; but news from the capital took a long time to reach far-distant Ufa in those days. The Governor W—— was absent on a journey. As folks had foreseen, he had been secretly summoned by the Emperor.

Soon came a hard winter and we found ourselves prisoners in our nursery—we had but one. Reading, writing, as well as arithmetic, which last I found an irksome task, occupied a great part of my time, Yet I had plenty of time to spare, because visitors came but seldom and walks were impossible. Even the old Russian Library was brought forth from its seclusion.

I had, on one occasion, heard someone remark that my grandfather was not well, but no one seemed in the least concerned about him and I soon forgot all about the matter. But one day as we were seated at table, a letter was handed to my father, which an express messenger had brought from Bagrovo. My father opened the letter, read a couple of lines, burst into tears, and handed the letter to my mother. She read it, and although she did not cry, she seemed very much perturbed. Dinner was finished in great haste. My father and mother ate nothing. After dinner they went into their room and sent us to the nursery. When we were allowed to return, my father was preparing to go out, and my mother,

who was still much upset, said to me: "We are all going to Bagrovo, my dear Sergei, as your grandfather is ill and likely to die." I heard these words with the most sorrowful awe. I knew, of course, that we all must die: but Death. as I pictured it, was a frightful apparition, a bugbear of which I could not endure to think. I felt the greatest compassion for my grandfather, but I had no desire to witness his death: nor did I wish to overhear any of his sighs and groans during his death-agony. And I was much concerned at the thought that perhaps my mother might be made ill. "And are we going there in the middle of the winter?" thought I. "Sister and I are both so little. We shall be frozen to death!" All these thoughts and fears thronged my brain; and, much agitated and distressed, I sat there in silence, absorbed by my own imagination, which grew more and more painfully excited. In addition to the horror I felt at witnessing my grandfather's death, I felt a great aversion for Bagrovo. I had not forgotten our miserable life there without our father and mother, and I never wished to see the place again, above all in winter time. Just then my father returned, he came hastily into the bedroom and said in a tone of satisfaction which astonished me: "God be praised, I have been able to secure everything! Anitschkov will let us have his covered sledge, and we can have a hooded one from Michailov. Now, little mother, pack up as quickly as you can. I shall get my leave to-morrow, and then we can set off at once with post-horses. My mother replied sorrowfully: "I can be ready directly. It is only your leave which will delay us!" The same evening all the preparations for the journey were made—packing-up and getting provisions ready. allowed to take only a very few books. I told my mother all my fears and apprehensions; some of these she was unable to calm: but when I confessed that I was afraid of being frozen, she laughed and said we should find it very hot in the covered sledge.

At noon next day everything was ready. The sledges were loaded. All we wanted was permission for my father to leave Ufa. This arrived at three o'clock. The post-horses were at once sent for, and that evening we set out for Bagrovo.

A WINTER'S JOURNEY

This two-days journey has left a most disagreeable and painful impression on my mind. As I stepped into the covered sledge. I was fairly aghast at the first sight of the low. cramped, leather-hooded vehicle, through whose narrow door one could only squeeze with difficulty. This sledge was to convey Parascha and Annuschka as well as my sister and myself. I should have much preferred travelling with my mother in the other sledge, but the cold was appalling and I was ordered to remain in the coach-sledge. I obeyed with great reluctance and some tears. My mother was unable to travel in a covered sledge, even in winter: she became ill and giddy. Even in the half-closed style of sledge she was obliged to sit in a particular manner, nearly outside the hood, to let the fresh air circulate around her. It soon grew quite warm in our coach-sledge, and I was fain to get rid of the handkerchief which had been tied over my fur cap. We glided swiftly over the level road and for the very first time I experienced the peculiar delight of rapid motion. Each door of our sledge had a tiny square window furnished with a thick pane of glass. I crouched, as well as I could, before one of these windows and gazed out with great enjoyment. It was a moonlight night, the heavy signposts, and, frequently, trees whisked past us . . . but, alas, this entertainment came to a speedy end. The pane grew dim, a thousand fantastic patterns seemed traced upon its surface, and soon it was covered with a thick coating of ice. A grim prospect arose before my vision; the forbidding house at Bagrovo buried in the snow, and within, my dying grandfather! My little sister had long since fallen asleep and at last a refreshing sleep closed my weary evelids. On awakening the next morning my first impression was that it must be very very early, as only a faint light glimmered in our sledge, the panes being now much more thickly covered with ice. We all appeared to have grown suddenly weak, and my little sister seemed to have grown thinner. She crept across to me, and hugged and kissed me. It was now exceedingly hot in the sledge. After a short time I was struck by the peculiar

creaking sound made by our sledge, and I perceived that we were making very slow progress. I was told that we had passed the third station of the high road and were not travelling with three post-horses harnessed abreast, but were now proceeding along a country road, drawn by peasants' horses harnessed tandem. This annoyed me dreadfully, and even my dear little sister could not comfort me. She knew exactly what would please me under ordinary circumstances and tried to coax me to read to her from the book in the side pocket of the sledge; but I was thoroughly out of humour. and refused her request. At last we arrived at the Tartar village, where we had to change horses, our coachman, Stepan, having ridden on in advance to bespeak the same. entered the peasant's hut, which had been prepared for us to breakfast in and to drink our tea. My mother looked ill and fatigued. The whole night long she had not slept and felt quite sick and dizzy; this served to increase my anxiety and disquietude. There was a wide plank bed in the white. clean room where we were seated, part of which was piled almost to the ceiling with a heap of somewhat dingy-hued feather beds: the vacant part of the boards was covered with white felt. My mother spread her travelling pelisse on the felt and asked for her cushions out of the sledge; she then lay down and fell asleep immediately, after bidding us drink our tea. She slept a full hour, while we children and our father drank our tea as noiselessly as possible and even found time to have some roast meat warmed up for our breakfast. The rest refreshed and invigorated my mother, and we proceeded on our way. In the evening we repeated the process, that is to say we halted to change horses, but this time we were not entertained in a clean Tartar house, but in a filthy Mordvin hut. I vow that in the whole course of my life I never beheld anything more loathsome than this hut. The dirt, the appalling odour from the inmates and their cattle-who were all herded together-were abominable; and the only furniture consisted of narrow benches on which my exhausted mother could not recline. At last my father managed to devise a sort of couch for her by placing some benches side-by-side. She could eat nothing, and drank only a little tea. We sat with our feet tucked up on the

benches, as the draught along the floor chilled us in spite of our warm shoes. The folks said the frost was increasing: and whenever the hut door was opened the cold air rushed like a white, whirling cloud into the room. We regaled ourselves with hot soup and pasties, and then continued our journey. Our coach-sledge had become so thoroughly chilled, owing to the door having carelessly been left open while we were in the hut, that it was a long time before it was warm again. Words fail me to describe my misery and restlessness. I had a presentiment, in fact I was convinced, that some misfortune threatened us. Either we should inevitably be frozen to death like the crows and sparrows of which Parascha had told us-how they would suddenly fall dead upon the ground while in full flight-or we should fall ill. But all my fears and misgivings were far more concentrated upon my mother than upon myself and my sister. Our covered sledge had grown gradually warm again, but my mother was sitting out in the freezing air. My dreary forebodings prevented me from sleeping. Suddenly we came to a full stop, and after a minute or so this halt made me feel uneasy. I awoke Parascha and entreated and urged her to tap on the door and to call out to someone and ask why we were at a standstill: but Parascha who was usually so good-tempered and obliging was very cross at being disturbed, and replied very sharply: "No one can hear me if I knock: the driver knows very well why he has stopped." Had she but known how miserable I felt, she would have had pity on me and knocked and enquired. At last the sledges continued on their way. The next day, when we alighted to drink tea, I heard that my fears had not been so groundless after all. The Tschuasche, who acted as our postillion, had only just escaped being frozen to death. Insufficiently clad, he had fallen senseless from his horse; fortunately he had been restored to consciousness by vigorous rubbing and had been brought along to the next village. From this time I date the dislike-even horrorwhich I feel for winter-travelling with peasants' horses instead of by post-chaise. The miserable harness made of bark, the feeble, ill-trained horses who never know what it is to have a feed of oats, and above all the poor peasants, who are not sufficiently warmly dressed to travel even ten

versts in the piercing cold all this is truly painful.

The road which we followed to Bagrovo was not the same as that which we used in summer. Not a trace of the latter was visible on the steppe. No direct road was possible in winter, and the only way of getting along was by travelling from one village to the next.

When morning came and I crept forth from my prison and once more beheld the light of day, I felt somewhat encouraged and consoled. My mother, too, had grown more accustomed to our mode of travelling and felt better: and the cold was a little less intolerable. But all too soon the short winter day came to an end, and the gloomy night, which closed in very early in our covered sleigh, filled my timid soul once more with terror and frightful presentiments. Alas, again not without reason. I say alas, because ever since that time an incurable belief in such presentiments took root in my being; and throughout the course of my subsequent life I have had to suffer worse torments anticipating than enduring the actual blows of Fate, although my forebodings are but seldom realised. That evening, as we neared Bagrovo, our sledge collided with the stump of a tree and was upset. I was asleep and bumped my eye against a brass nail from which the side-pocket was suspended, in addition to which injury I was all but smothered, as Parascha, my sister, and a whole collection of cushions fell on top of me and it was some time before the overturned sledge could be righted. In the first moments after my rescue I was only too thankful to have escaped suffocation and paid little or no attention to my hurt. To my intense affliction Annuschka, Parascha, and even my little sister, did nothing but laugh at my fright and relief, little guessing how near I had been to actual death from smothering. Happily my mother knew nothing about this mischance.

BAGROVO IN WINTER

At last we heard dogs barking. The wan, wavering lights of a row of peasants' huts glimmered through the now only half-frozen pane of our little window, and we guessed that we

had arrived at Bagrovo and had to pass through no more villages. We halted at the first peasant's yard, and I heard later that my father had asked for news of my grandfather. The reply came that he was still alive. We now proceeded with bells attached to the harness, and very, very slowly. We were expected and our approach had been heard; and, in spite of the lateness of the hour and the intense cold, my grandmother and my Aunt Tatiana Stepanovna met us at the house-door. Both were sobbing violently. We entered the house noiselessly. My aunt busied herself with me and my sister, while my father and mother went straight to my grandfather's room. He was fast approaching his end, but was still perfectly conscious and had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson. We were accommodated in the drawing room, as our own especial room, which our grandfather had promised us, although already built and roofed-in, was not ready for us. The house was full of people. All our aunts and their husbands had arrived. Madame Erlykina and her two daughters occupied Tatiana Stepanovna's room; Ivan Petrovitsch Karataiev and Erlykin slept somewhere in the carpenters' sheds: my remaining three aunts were lodged in my grandmother's room close beside my sick grandfather's chamber. dining-room was very chilly and the drawing-room equally so. There was some difficulty in procuring and setting up a bedstead for my mother, and I and my sister had to be content with the sofa; a feather bed was laid on the floor for my father. The samovar was brought and tea was prepared for us. My mother was quite overcome by heat when she left my grandfather's room, which was so warm that one could hardly breathe in it. The drawing-room felt very cold to her. and she set to work to try and make it a little more comfortable. The door leading to the hall was closed and a curtain hung over it. Felt rugs were spread on the floor, and the room, which contained two stoves, soon grew warm and remained so during the whole of our stay at Bagroyo.

My mind was a confused whirl of sensations, memories, terrors, and forebodings; and my head began to ache violently as the result of the knock it had received. My mother soon noticed my indisposition and the swelling round my eye, and

we told her all about the accident. By her orders a cold compress was applied to my eye, and a bandage tied round my head. She herself, however, was in a much more suffering condition, the result of her sleeplessness, fatigue, and continual headache during the whole of the journey. She did not lie down, but sank exhausted on her bed; naturally, we were sent to bed at once. My father remained the whole night beside my grandfather, whose death was expected each moment. My mother fell asleep very soon, but for long enough I was unable to sleep. I was continually expecting the death agony of my grandfather to begin: and as death was associated in my mind with the most frightful sufferings. I listened with strained attention for the sound of his groanings and lamentations. I was very anxious about my mother. My head ached badly, my eye was much swollen, I was in a fever. Fantastic visions swam before me, and I thought I was going to be ill. But all these ills vanished in a sweet and reviving sleep. Awaking in the dim dawn, I saw that my mother still slept and I felt quite happy. My head and eye had ceased to pain me, although the latter was now so swollen that I was unable to open it and had a wide blue ring round it. It would appear that my father had been absent all night, for his bed was undisturbed. I gazed around the room. Everything in it was precisely the same as in summer, only now the windows were decked with arabesques of frost. Lying idly there, I gave myself entirely up to my day-dreams or, more correctly speaking, to my combinations of thought, for I gravely considered our present situation and all that the future had to offer. As might well be expected, these calculations were of a quite childish character. "When my grandfather dies," thought I, "my grandmother will very soon die too, for she is old and has white hair. Then we can take Aunt Tatiana to live with us in Ufa and she can sleep in the empty nursery. If grandmother doesn't die, she can come too. This house shall be removed from Bagrovo to Sergeievka, and set up quite close to the lake, and in summer we shall go and live there and fish all day long with Aunt Tatiana." But all these sweet visions vanished at the thought of my grandfather's death, about which there could be no possible doubt. I knew that he wished to see us children, and I must confess that the

approaching meeting filled me with unutterable horror. The most appalling thought was that my grandfather when bidding me adieu, would take me in his arms and die there and then, while no one would be able to extricate me from his rigid embrace, and I should have to be buried with him. Only the brain of a child could have evolved such a possible catastrophe from tales of the dead and the stiffness of their limbs. But added to my already clear intelligence. I possessed certain contradictory elements of silliness. Oh God, my heart fairly stopped beating at the thought! I could not breathe, a cold sweat of fear bedewed my brow: I could bear it no longer, sprang up, and seated myself outside the bed: I even tried to wake my sister, and if I did not scream, it was solely because my voice completely failed me. At this instant my mother awoke and was quite alarmed at the sight of my face. The bandage had fallen off and a black and blue swelling extended all around my eye. My phantom terrors fled before the anxiety of my mother. I ran to her, and sitting on her bedside, assured her that I felt quite well and that the pain had gone. My mother was reassured and said the swelling would soon go down. Her sleep had done her good, she rose hastily from her bed, dressed herself, and went to see my grandfather. It had grown quite light: my sister awoke, and was likewise very much frightened at first, when she saw the condition of my eye; but a fresh bandage was tied across it, and she was much relieved. She was not a bit frightened of my grandfather, but was very much distressed about his illness and very anxious to see him. Her courage and her love for my grandfather both shamed and cheered me. My mother soon came back and told us that our grandfather was very weak but still quite sensible, and he wished to see us and give us his blessing. In spite of all efforts to master my agitation, I was quite unable to conceal my terror and turned perfectly white. My mother, in order to hearten me, said: "How can you be so frightened of your poor grandfather, who can hardly breathe and who is going to die so soon!" This was precisely what was terrifying me most, but I dare not say so. My mother conducted us to my grandfather's room, where he lay in bed with closed eyes. His face was pale and so changed that I scarcely recognised him. At the

head of the bed sat my grandmother in an armchair, while my father stood at the foot, his eyes all red and swollen from weeping. He bent down to his father's ear, and said in a loud voice: "The children have come to say good-bye to you." My grandfather opened his eyes, and without uttering a single word, he made the sign of the Cross upon each of us with a trembling hand, and touched our heads with his fingers: we kissed his thin hand and began to cry. Everyone in the room wept, and even sobbed; and now, for the first time. I saw that all my uncles and aunts were present and the very oldest servants. My fears had all disappeared, and at this moment I only felt a great love and compassion for my dying grandfather. It was suffocatingly hot in the sick room. My mother took us back into the drawing room very shortly. where my sister and I burst into such violent weeping that it was a long time before we could be comforted. In order to pacify us our mother let our cousins come and sit with us. They were much more composed, were very friendly with us, and we gradually grew quieter and began to talk to them. We all talked together until dinner time, when the meal was served in the usual way in the dining room. A plentiful dinner was provided, and with the exception of my mother and father (the latter never once sat down to table) everyone ate with a good appetite and talked quite cheerfully, but in low tones. After dinner our cousins accompanied us back into the drawing-room, and I talked and chattered with them without a pause. Without actually realising it, I was striving to divert my own thoughts from my grandfather's approaching death by talking about all sorts of trivial matters. mother was continually in and out of the sick room, and gave us permission to go to our cousins' room. To reach this we had to pass along the corridor and through the maidservants' hall, which was filled with maids of all ages. I was very much interested in their dress: some of them wore ordinary dresses of striped hempen linen; others gowns and sleeveless jackets; and others again merely skirts and smocks. Each sat at her wheel, spinning. The spectacle was quite new to me. I stood awhile and watched how each spinning maid drew the flax with one hand, while with the other she turned the spindle and wound the thread. They worked very briskly and smartly;

and as they were all silent, the humming of the spindles and the rustling of the flax made a curious medley of sound such as I had never heard before. Just as I stood there watching and listening, full of interest and curiosity, a loud sob was heard in my grandfather's room. In an instant the women's room was empty! The spinning girls flung down their distaffs and spindles and rushed to the bedroom door. I verily believed that my grandfather was dead. Full of terror and horror at the thought. I managed—how I know not—to reach my cousins' room, sprang on my aunt's bed, and hid my face in the pillows. Parascha left us, and ran off to see what was happening in the poor old master's room. We remained in a state of growing anxiety, but Parascha returned in a short time and told us that our grandfather had been seized with convulsions, which would certainly continue. "He is certain to die to-night," she added, in a tone of indifference. We remained a couple of hours with our cousins, but I talked no more and sat like one condemned to death. At last we were summoned to tea in the dining-room. My mother. grandmother, and aunts came one after another into the room, but only remained there a short time. My father never made his appearance, and I was troubled at not seeing him for such a time. Already I could sympathise with and comprehend his feelings at the sight of his expiring father. After tea our cousins came once more to us in the salon, but I was quite unable to take any part in the conversation. In an hour or two they went off to bed. How I envied them not feeling in the least frightened. How I wished that they could have stayed longer with us. Without them I felt ever so much more uneasy. My dear little sister was grieving sadly over our grandfather's approaching death. She never ceased talking of him, and saying: "Poor grandfather will never eat anything again: they are going to bury him in the snow: I am so sorry for him!" She cried, but she was not frightened and soon fell asleep. I entreated Parascha not to leave the the room, and she promised to stay until our mother should come. In place of the night lamp, which only gave a dim light, I begged Parascha to light a candle. As I observed that she was growing very sleepy, I began to try and engage her in some sort of conversation to keep her awake. I asked:

"Why isn't my grandfather crying and screaming? Doesn't it hurt him to die?" Parascha replied with a smile: "No, for when people are dying they have no pain: they feel and understand nothing. Your grandfather cannot speak, and knows no one: he tries to speak, stares into people's faces. but can only move his lips." A new and still more frightful vision of my dying grandfather arose before my eyes, a vision which refused to vanish. I could realise the full immensity of this agony, which cannot even be told to others as the sufferer is unable to speak. I clutched Parascha's hand and never released it for a single instant. I did not utter another word. The candle had burned very dim and wanted snuffing, but I could not bring myself to relinquish Parascha's hand—if only for an instant. Still holding my hand and without rising from her seat, she had to lean across and pull the candle over to our side of the table, until it was near enough for her to snuff it. She was growing very sleepy and nodding off; but I kept her awake by constantly saving in a pitiful tone: "Dear Parascha, don't go to sleep!" At last my mother came. She was very much surprised at finding me still awake; but on hearing what was the matter she took me into her bed and held me close to her, while she rested without undressing. I clasped her round the neck with both arms, and consoled by her assurances that my grandfather was not going to die just yet, I fell promptly asleep. I slept very calmly for an hour, but my awaking was ghastly. As I opened my eyes, I perceived that my mother was no longer beside me; nor was Parascha in the room. The taper was extinguished, and the tiny tongue of flame flickering on the wick of the expiring night-lamp lighted up the chamber now and then with a wavering glimmer which threatened every instant to leave me in complete darkness. No words can express my terror. My heart was burning hot, and yet I was cold as ice from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I hid my head under the bed-clothes and felt a cold sweat breaking out on my skin. In vain I closed my eyes. My grandfather stood beside me, staring in my face; and his lips moved exactly as Parascha had described. The crickets chirped in the hollow wooden walls, and their tiny song kept me in a state of nervous tension. Had a knock or creak been

heard at this moment, I verily believe I should have died on the spot. Once I thought I heard a distant sob. I thought it was a trick of my fancy; but the sob became more audible and broke into loud groans and lamentations. I could contain myself no longer. I flung off my coverings and began to scream as loudly as I could. My sister awoke and joined in my cries. It is probable that our cries continued for a long time before any heed was given them, for, at that very moment, my grandfather expired and the whole household rushed, weeping and lamenting, to his chamber, and made such an uproar that our feeble voices might well have remained unheard. I was well-nigh out of my senses and should have fainted, had not Parascha bounced into the room, She had been lying fast asleep just outside our door in the corridor, when the chorus of lamentations awoke her. Luckily, being nearer to us, she distinguished our voices through the din. She re-lighted the dving night-lamp, took us one on each knee, and quieted us in some degree. Some time afterwards our mother came. She looked exceedingly sorrowful and ill, and told us that our grandfather had died at six o'clock that morning and that our father was coming immediately to take some rest, as he had not slept for two nights. Indeed, he arrived very shortly, kissed us, making the sign of the Cross, and said: "Your grandfather is no more!" He wept bitterly. and I and my sister wept with him. All sounds of mourning had now ceased in the house, and my father lay down and immediately fell asleep. The shaded light was placed in a corner of the room. A pale glimmer shone on the window panes, and I perceived it was the dawn. Much comforted by the thought, I soon fell asleep beside my mother and sister.

For a long time I slept. When I opened my eyes a clear winter's sun was shining through our windows. The first sounds which fell on my ear were the notes of psalms which were being chanted in the hall; and then I heard sounds of weeping and wailing. The events of the preceding night thronged together in my memory, and I guessed that they were praying to God for my dead grandfather's soul. I was quite alone in the room, and believing Parascha had gone with my sister to join in the prayers, I waited patiently

until someone should come. In this bright sunlight, solitude had no fears for me. Very soon Parascha actually did arrive. leading my little sister whose eves were red with weeping. Parascha exclaimed: "What a time you have slept! It will soon be time for dinner!" She began hurriedly to dress me. As I commenced washing myself, there fell upon my ear the muffled murmur of chanting voices, which appeared to proceed from the dining hall. I asked what it was. reciting the Psalter1 for your grandfather," she replied, as she dashed cold water on my head. I was quite composed and had no farther misgivings, when my sister suddenly said: "Come into the hall, little brother; grandfather is there." I was startled, and not grasping the whole of her meaning, I asked: "Why is grandfather in the hall? Is he still alive?" "How can he possibly be alive!" interrupted Parascha, "He is quite stiff already: he has been washed, and dressed in his shroud: and they have carried him into the dining-room and put him on the table. The Prayers for the Dead have been said, and the priests have gone, and there's only old Yekim there now, reading the Psalms. Don't pay any attention to your sister! What is there to see in your grandfather? He looks hideous, and peeps at you through his eyelids." Every word she uttered filled my heart with fresh horror, and her last frightful description roused such terror in me that I dashed screaming out of the drawing-room, rushed through the corridor and the maids' quarters, and took refuge in my cousins' room. Parascha and my sister dashed after me, but could not coax me back again into the drawing-room. It is true that such terror is ridiculous; and I cannot blame Parascha for laughing while she tried to persuade me to go back with her, even employing force, to which I stoutly offered resistance with both hands and feet but the sufferings, which blind terror creates in the heart of a child, are so awful that it is cruel to treat them as a joke. Parascha went off to bring my mother, who, as I heard later,

¹ So long as a corpse remains in the house, the Psalms must be recited daily in the death chamber. After the funeral, the Psalter is read unceasingly in the room where death took place for the next nine, and in some cases even for the next fourteen, days. Naturally this ceremony is omitted in the case of people of small means. [Tr.S.R.]

was busying herself with my grandmother, who had fainted at the conclusion of the service as she had been greatly exhausted by weeping and lamenting. My mother and my aunt, Jelisaveta Stepanovna, returned together, and I flung myself on my mother's neck and entreated her not to take me back to the drawing-room. She was annoyed with me and said she was ashamed that I-a boy-should exhibit myself in such a cowardly light before my cousins: she wished to compel me to accompany her back. But I shewed such signs of positive desperation that it made her quite nervous. My aunt took compassion on me, and proposed that she and her two daughters, who had no fear of death, should move into the drawing-room. Under any other circumstances my mother would not have accepted the favour at any price, but she was only too willing and grateful to accept it now. A weight like a stone rolled from my heart when it was settled that we were to flit into this corner chamber—so far distant from the dining-room. To this remote spot no sound either of Psalms or "Lamentations" could penetrate. At that time it was the custom, nay, a sacred duty, to "lament" the dead. Not only my aunts, but every old woman in the house and village, entered the hall, one after the other, weeping and lamenting and addressing the corpse: "Beloved father, why hast thou left us all alone"? and so on. The procession from my aunt's room was in full swing, but I saw nothing of it, as we were just then summoned to dinner. A large, round table had been set out in my grandmother's room, and as I and my sister entered we were confronted by my grandmother and all my aunts and cousins. sitting silently side-by-side, each wearing a black handkerchief wrapped round her head: my two uncles were also present. The sight of this assembly made a painful impression on me. Everyone kissed us, wept, and repeated in a sort of chant: "Your beloved grandfather has gone away and left you!" and similar utterances, which I cannot recall. Meanwhile the table was spread with all manner of dishes. I do not know why, but the whole of the waiting and service was performed by maids only. My father was engaged with something in the carpenters' shop, and we remained some time waiting for him. After a while my mother said to her

mother-in-law: "Why don't you take your seat at table, dear mother? Alexei Stepanovitsch will be here directly." My grandmother replied that Alexei was now the master of the house, and he must be treated with due respect. mother persisted: "He is your son, dear mother, and you will always remain the mistress of this house." My grandmother made a deprecating movement with her hands and said: "No, no, dear daughter! Our old country ways are different to that: we know how to keep our own places." I listened to all these remarks with the greatest interest and curiosity. While this discourse was proceeding, the door opened and in walked my father. It was two days since I had seen him, and then only dimly during the night: he looked pale, sorrowful and seemed to have grown suddenly thin. The next instant everyone rose and went towards him: even my fat old grandmother, who could scarcely stand on her feet, waddled towards him, supporting herself on someone's arm: his four sisters sank groaning at his feet. I could not understand all they said, and much of it has escaped my memory. I only recollect the words: "Now you are our father: do not forsake us orphans." My dear father, himself moved to tears, raised each sister and embraced her: and when his mother came laboriously up to him, he bowed deeply before her, kissed her hands, and assured her that he should always behave towards her with respect and obedience and that everything should remain as before his father's death. After this performance, everyone turned to my mother, and without prostrating themselves, entreated her, as the new mistress of the house, to bestow her protection and favour upon them. I could see that my mother was greatly annoyed and put out by all this beseeching and obsequiousness, as she was only too well aware how her husband's relatives disliked her and wished her every evil. She replied, very coldly, that it was not her intention to usurp any authority in the house, and everyone would be loved and respected as in the past. We now sat down to dinner, where everyone (my mother alone excepted) began to eat with such good appetite that I was quite astonished. My aunt Tatiana Stepanovna presided over a gigantic tureen of eel soup, full of great lumps of liver and roe, and

kept urging us, in lachrymose tones, to eat, saying: " Just a little liver and roe, little mother, sisters, and brother! Our dead father was so fond of it," and I distinctly saw tears streaming into her plate. Everyone wept and ate enormously. After dinner we all went to lie down, and slept until the hour for evening tea. Passing through the maids' room to our new apartment. I glanced fearfully through the open door into the corridor which led to the dining-room, whence proceeded the monotonous, wearisome drone of the Psalter-reader. My father and mother had lain down to rest, and I and my sister conversed in whispers. I was quite courageous in the day-time and revelled in the clear sunlight. And I was much pleased with our new lodging. In the first place it was a long way from my dead grandfather; secondly it was a corner room, and on one side the windows looked out across the Buguruslan which, thanks to its swift current and many tributaries, never froze in winter, and took a sharp curve just opposite the window. rushing river between its snow-heaped banks; the summer cookhouse on the island joined to the mainland by the higharched bridge; that other island, covered with tall, slender trees in all their panoply of snowy attire; and far away in the distance, the lofty, craggy Tschelvaievkaia Hill-the whole scene delighted and tranquillised me. For the first time in my life I realised the peculiar beauty of a wintry landscape.

My tranquillity lasted until twilight. Quite unconsciously I was losing my courage at the same rate as the setting sun's beams paled and expired. I disliked the idea of going to my grandmother's room for tea, as I had to pass the dreaded corridor when going through the maids' room. My mother insisted upon my going to tea. I steeled myselt to obey her, but ran as fast as I could through the servants' room, stopping my ears and turning my face away from the passage. After tea the talk in my grandmother's room turned on my grandfather, his death, what orders he had given as his wishes after he died. I also heard that he was to be buried two days later. My mother observing that such talk distressed me, quitted the room, taking me and my sister with her, and invited our cousins to accompany us. They stayed chatting with us for some time and then went off to bed. As the time had arrived

for us to do likewise, my old terrors awoke anew, and it was not difficult for my mother to read in my face the sort of night I should spend if she did not keep me with her. My heart was overflowing with thankfulness when of her own accord she said to me: "To-night you shall sleep with me, dear Sergei." This was precisely what I had desired: I had prayed for this. No doubt the favour would readily have been granted me: but how difficult and mortifying it would have been to have had to ask it! I had been unable to make up my mind as to what I should do, and had spent several hours in agonising doubt and distress of mind. Oh, thanks be to all those who can read the timid heart of a child, and spare it humiliation! The night passed peacefully away. I awoke next day before the gray dawn broke, and listened to much interesting conversation between my father and mother. I gathered that it was my father's intention to resign his post and to settle down at Bagrovo. This distressed me, for Bagrovo had on two separate occasions been thoroughly hateful to me, and I took no interest whatever in the place. All my affections were concentrated on Sergeivka, where I had passed such a happy summer. And now for the first time I heard that I was soon to have a new brother or, perhaps, a new sister.

This new day passed off like yesterday. I was calm and courageous during daylight, and full of terror when evening came. The matter that really troubled me most was my uncertainty as to whether my mother would again permit me to sleep with her. I awaited the time for preparing the bed in a state of great tension, and was not a little rejoiced when I saw my little pillow placed beside my mother's big one. For the first time I now heard that my grandfather was to be buried at Neklyudovo the next day, and quite against his wishes too, as he had always detested the place and the people in it. Why his wishes were to be thus set aside I could not then explain, nor can I now; but I recollect there was some good reason for the decision. I must confess that I heartily wished to have my grandfather removed from the house as I felt I could have no peace of mind until that was done. There are people who go through their lives dreading the sight of the dead. Up to my twentieth year I myself

could not endure to look at a corpse. This terror is difficult to define. Adults who suffer from it naturally only dread the shock given to their weak nerves by the harrowing spectacle. I, on the contrary, was actually frightened of the corpse itself and was convinced that if I looked at my grandfather, he would awake, and get hold of me.

The sad and solemn day of the funeral had come. Everyone was up and dressed very early. In the house was much running to and fro and banging of doors. We went to drink tea in our grandmother's room earlier than usual, and found her and our aunts already dressed in travelling costume. At the door stood several sledges with horses harnessed tandem. The courtyard and the road were crowded with people. Not only were my grandiather's peasants gathered there with their wives and children, but all the folks from the neighbouring villages had assembled to escort the dead man, whom they all had loved and honoured as a father, to his last long home. Many, many years later I heard the Mordvins in the district refer to him affectionately as "our father." When everything was ready, the whole household assembled in the dining room to take a last look at my grandfather; and a great sound of weeping arose. I was deeply affected, but felt no more fear, only a gloomy consciousness of the portentousness of the event and deep sorrow for my poor old grandfather, whom I should never see again. All doors stood wide open, the house was very cold, and my mother told Parascha that my sister was not to remain in the death chamber. although the little one cried and begged to be allowed to see her grandfather. So we three were left by ourselves in my grandmother's cosy room. Suddenly the hollow sound of the tramp of many heavy feet reverberated through the hall. accompanied by sobs and laments. This passed into the distance, and soon, looking from the window. I saw the wooden coffin, raised high above the heads of the people, issuing from the house-door. As the dense crowd parted a little, I could see that the coffin was borne by my father, my two uncles, and the grey-headed old servant, Peter Feodorov. This old man himself was supported by another servant. My grandmother at first wished to follow the corpse on foot, but soon was compelled to seat herself in a sledge. My mother and

aunts all walked. Many of those present in the courtyard fell on their knees. Slowly and solemnly the crowd marched to the road, where they formed into a long procession, and finally vanished in the distance. I stood upon a table at the window in order to see the last of them, and shed tears of genuine sorrow for my good grandfather, so beloved by all who knew him. For an instant I even wished to see him once more and to kiss his thin hand,

We sat, sad and sorrowful, in the grandmother's room. After the noise and bustle of removing the coffin, the house had grown of a death-like stillness. Suddenly a sledge glided up to the door, and I saw my mother and my two cousins alight from it. I cried out joyfully, for I thought they had gone to Neklyudovo, fully twenty versts away. Directly after my mother's arrival the house began to fill with people returning from the funeral procession. My mother had followed the corpse as far as the end of the village. There the coffin had been placed upon a sledge, and those of the party who were going to accompany it to Neklyudovo had also taken their seats in sledges. We all returned to our corner chamber. My mother, whose anguish was great, for she had been devotedly attached to my grandfather, was, addition, quite worn out with fatigue and remained lying down nearly the whole day, unable to pay the slightest attention to us. Our cousins stayed with us and we were all very friendly together. They did most of the talking; and I learnt a good many things from them, of which I had never dreamt and which I considered to be well-nigh impossible. For instance, I gathered that they feared their parents far more than they loved them; and that they habitually lied to and deceived both father and mother. I tried to make these girls ashamed of themselves by pointing out how disgraceful such conduct was, and advising them to behave as all good children should. In vain I quoted from the books I had read and told them what I had gathered from my own experience. My cousins did not choose to understand me: they laughed at me, and told me that their parents were very different to mine.

It was late in the evening when my father reached home. My grandmother and aunts were spending the night with

their relatives at Neklyudovo; but in spite of all invitations to do likewise, my father had left directly after the burial and hurried back to us. He had eaten nothing the whole day and was very weary, as he had followed the coffin on foot for the greater part of the way. That night I slept with my little sister in a special little bed. As night came on I felt my old fears reviving, but concealed them as well as I could. My mother had promised that I should sleep in her bed, but she had been uneasy and had fallen asleep before it was my bed-time. I lay awake a long time: the coffin was always before my eyes, wavering from side to side high above the heads of the crowd and within it lay something of which I dare not think. At length I managed to fall asleep, and awoke later than usual the next day.

My grandmother, with my uncles and aunts, returned to Bagrovo at noon. The day before, every room in the house had been well scrubbed out. All the stoves had been lighted and the whole house—with the exception of the dining-room which was not to be used until the ninth day¹—was thoroughly warm. The recitation of the Psalter was continued day and night in the room which my grandfather had occupied up to the time of his death. We dined and drank tea in my grandmother's bed-chamber which, after the dining-room, was the largest room in the house; and otherwise everything went on as usual. My mother remained ill for some days, and spent most of her time with us in our bright corner room, which was indeed somewhat cold. But she elected to remain there until our return to Ufa, which was fixed to take place at the end of nine days.

Young as I was at that time, I could not fail to observe how all my aunts—especially Tatiana Stepanovna—kept continually kissing and embracing my father and repeating that he was now their sole consolation and protector: while, in addition, they heaped caresses upon my mother. Tatiana Stepanovna was a very frequent visitor of ours, "to prevent my dearest sister-in-law from feeling dull," and kept continually urging my mother to take a hand in the housekeeping. But my mother invariably replied that it was not her intention

¹ On the ninth day following a death a requiem mass is sung. [Tr. S.R.]

to interfere, in any way, with domestic matters; her opinion or consent were in no wise necessary; and everything must be referred to Arina Vasilievna as usual. After some private family councils, my father informed my mother that his late father had expressed certain wishes before our arrival. the exception of my godmother, the amiable Aksinia Stepanovna, each of his daughters was to have a family of houseservants made over to her: besides this, he had ordered a tract of Bashkir land to be purchased for Tatiana Stepanovna, to which property twenty-five of the peasant-serfs whom he had specified by name were to be transferred. In addition he had promised each daughter a great amount of corn and various household goods. "Although all that my father said to me was: 'Never neglect Tania; and when she marries, give her exactly the same marriage-portion as I gave your other sisters!' I shall faithfully fulfil all his dying commands to my mother," concluded my father. My mother signified her full acquiescence. When my father declared his intention of carrying out all my grandfather's wishes exactly, his mother and all his sisters thanked him most effusively and made the deepest of curtsies, especially Aunt Tatiana Stepanovna. This last tripped up to my mother and tried to embrace and kiss her too, but my mother declined all thanks or caresses and replied very composedly that the whole affair was none of her business.

I noticed that Parascha was always whispering in my mother's ear. Sometimes my mother listened to what she said, but more frequently told her to be silent and leave the room. But once, while dressing me, Parascha said: "Yes, you may sit here in your corner room, while you are being nicely robbed elsewhere!" I had no idea what she meant and asked for "Why!" she exclaimed, "how many an explanation. peasants, servants, and all sorts of goods haven't your aunts got out of your father! And all through trickery! They have told him all sorts of lies about what the old master said. It's quite true they were always begging him to give them this and that, but the master always replied: 'You must be content with whatever your brother chooses to give you!' Nikanor Tanaitschenok heard him say so with his own ears, and everyone in the house knows it too." I hardly compre-

hended what she meant and paid but little heed to her remarks. But I repeated them to my mother according to my invariable custom. She was excessively angry, and rebuked and threatened Parascha with such severity that I was quite Parascha burst into tears, begged pardon, and threw herself at my mother's feet; then crossed herself and swore that nothing of the sort should ever happen again. My mother told her that if she ever repeated the offence, she should be packed off to Bagrovo at Simbirsk and set to herd the cows there. My heart was heavy indeed for my poor Parascha, who gazed pitifully at me and begged me to intercede for her in such pleading tones that I spoke up for her most earnestly and took all the blame on myself. My mother forgave Parascha, but told her-her most trusted and confidential maid—that she was not to come near her unless summoned. Then my mother spoke to me, and warned me very gravely never either to listen to servants' gossip nor to believe it. Parascha's tales she described as pure inventions of the Bagrovo servants; and naturally, at my age, it never entered my mind to doubt the truth of my mother's explanation. It was long enough indeed before I realised why my mother had been so irritated with Parascha, and that she had wished to conceal the sad truth from me, knowing it herself only too well.

I was quite charmed with the uncommon kindness of my grandmother and aunts towards us all, and equally convinced that they were exceedingly fond of us. In consequence of which, I treated them all with the utmost affection, especially my grandmother. Very soon I proposed that I should read aloud to them out of the *Rossiad*, and also give them some selections from Sumarokov's tragedies. They listened to me with great interest and vowed I was a very clever and accomplished child.

A few days passed and all my terrors and anxieties passed away with them. I ran joyously about the house, generally under Yevseyitsch's supervision. One day I ventured to peep into my grandfather's room. It was empty. All his belongings had been removed. Only his footstool remained and his bedstead, stripped to the slats, on which a bark mattress and a felt coverlet were spread, where the Psalter readers.

slept by turns. There were a couple of these, the old Yekim Myseyitsch and the young red-haired Vasili. They read the Psalms alternately, day and night. As I entered the deserted chamber for the first time, Myseyitsch was reading slowly and painfully, as, even with the aid of his spectacles, he had great difficulty in deciphering the old Slavonian characters. In one corner of the room stood a tall table covered with a white cloth. Upon this was propped a large sacred picture. before which a yellow waxen taper was burning. From time to time Yekim would cross himself, bowing himself almost down to the ground. I stood silently there for a long time. filled with melancholy emotions. Suddenly I was seized with an earnest desire to read a Psalm myself in honour of my late grandfather, as I had already learnt to read the old Slavonic characters in Ufa. I asked Yekim's permission to do this. which was granted. First of all, he made me recite a prayer. then he pushed my grandfather's stool forward, and standing on this I began to read. I was much agitated, my heart beat loudly, and my clear voice trembled. Soon, however, I recovered my composure and felt a peculiar satisfaction in the act. I had been reading a considerable time when the voice of Yevseyitsch, who had been standing behind me, interrupted me: "Isn't that enough, my Falcon?" said he, "Very well done, indeed!" I turned round. Myseyitsch was leaning against the window, fast asleep. We woke him up, whereupon he crossed himself and resumed his reading aloud. I knelt down and said a prayer before the holy picture, gazed at my grandfather's bed, on which the red-haired Vasili lay asleep. My thoughts flew to the past, and I left the room with a feeling of sorrow in my heart.

The ninth day came, the day of the requiem for the dead. The previous day everyone, my father and mother excepted, had gone to Neklyudovo and had spent the night there. My parents left early the next day for the same place, in order to be present at the beginning of the Mass. My sister and I were left alone in the house. Yevseyitsch was in charge of me, and I asked him to let me go to my grandfather's room and read from the Psalter again. When we got there, we found all just as it had been on the former occasion, with old Myseyitsh reading and Vasili snoring. Although I still felt somewhat

excited when I began to read, this time my voice never faltered, and the reading made me feel even happier than on the first occasion. Yevseyitsch listened patiently to me for a long time. At last he remarked as before: "Isn't that quite enough, my Falcon? Your poor little legs must be quite tired out." Myseyitsch had fallen asleep as before and in the same attitude, leaning against the window. Again I prayed, bowed myself to the ground, threw a sad look around my old grandfather's room. Then we left. Yevseyitsch remarked: "It all fits in well. They are praying beside your grandfather's grave at Neklyudovo, and here you have been reading the Psalms for him in his own room," and I felt an especial pleasure, and even a certain pride, at the thought.

Everyone returned from Neklyudovo in good time for dinner, which my aunts, as I had not failed to observe, had ordered with quite especial care. My grandmother's nieces and their elder children accompanied her. In anticipation of the arrival of the company the great table in the dining-room had been laid. My mother returned, looking and feeling very ill, while my father's eves were red with weeping. The rest of the party seemed quite composed. As soon as they arrived, everyone sat down to dinner. There was a great variety of dishes, which were all so rich that my mother would not allow me or my sister to eat much. At the end of the feast pancakes1 were served, which were eaten accompanied by many tears, although up to that time everyone had been talking quite cheerfully. My mother ate nothing, and looked so unhappy that I could not take my eyes off her. Later, during the afternoon, I overheard her telling Parascha, who was once more in favour, that she could not touch a mouthful, recollecting that on that very table my grandfather's corpse These words made a painful impression upon me and I could not think of the feast without disgust. The same evening those visitors, for whom no room could be found in the house, went home.

The next day our belongings were packed; and a day later, we set out, at an early hour, on our return journey. The adieux were long. Kisses, embraces, tears—all were

¹ A dish which is never omitted from anniversary or funeral feasts. Tr. S.R.]

endless; especially on the part of my grandmother, who kept repeating to my father: "For God's sake, Alexei, leave your post and come and settle here in Bagrovo! What can I do with the people? I am old and feeble, Tania is still too young, and, besides, we know nothing about the matter. Your father kept everything going by himself. No one will obey us. I and Tania may try as we will, but women are of no use as managers."

My father promised to do as she wished.

END OF THE FAMILY CHRONICLES



BOOK THREE RECOLLECTIONS



SKETCH VII

GYMNASIUM: FIRST PERIOD

It was midwinter of the year 1799 when we arrived in the Government City of Kazan. At that time I was eight years old. The cold was appalling. It is true that two rooms had been engaged in advance in Madame (Captain) Aristova's little house, but we had some difficulty in finding our lodgings. although they were situated in a good quarter of the town, in the Grusinskaia Street. Evening was closing in as we drove into the city in a plain travelling sledge, roofed over with matting and drawn by three of our own horses. Our cook and housemaid had gone on ahead of us. The journey, with the frequent halts for baiting, had lasted a very long time; we were a long time driving round the town trying to discover our lodgings; and it was a long time before we were comfortably settled, thanks to the awkwardness and inexperience of our country servants. I recollect that I was nearly frozen, that the rooms were terribly chilly, that the hot tea failed to warm me, and that I shivered, as if with fever, when I lay down in bed. And still more clearly do I recollect how my mother—who loved me so passionately—shivered too. with cold however, but with distress lest her darling child, her little Sergei, should take a chill. Clasped to my mother's heart and cowering under her rich pelisse of fox fur (it was lined with satin and had formed part of her dower) which was spread over the coverlet, I grew warm at last, fell asleep, and awoke well and cheerful next morning to the infinite relief of my anxious mother. My sister and brother, who were both of them younger than me, had remained behind in the Government of Simbirsk, where they were staying with a relative of my father, on her beautiful estate of Tschufarovo1,

This was the Tschufarovo of Sketch II of The Family Chronicle. [Tr].

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which, as we fondly anticipated, would be inherited by us in due course. At present, however, this relative refused to assist my father with so much as a copeck, so that we frequently found ourselves in actual need; nor would she lend him a rouble. I am entirely ignorant of the unfortunate pecuniary circumstances which compelled my parents to make this journey to Kazan. All I do know is that it was not undertaken on my account, although my whole future life was influenced by this trip. When I awoke the next day I was quite bewildered by the motion and bustle in the street; until now I had never seen anything like it. I was so impressed and enchanted by the scene outside that I could scarcely tear myself away from the window. The replies given to my innumerable questions by our Parascha were quite unsatisfactory, owing to the fact that she herself knew nothing about the place or the people; and so I applied to one of our hostess's maids and persecuted her for hours with a string of questions which she could not possibly answer. My father and mother had gone to the Cathedral to make their devotions, and from thence they had intended to make their business errands: but they had not taken me with them, fearing the intense cold which usually prevails about the time of the Epiphany. At midday they returned for dinner, but went out again in the evening. Worn out with the excitement and novelty of my impressions, I went to bed earlier than usual and fell asleep while talking to Parascha and listening to her conversation. Scarcely had I done so than I was gently roused up by Parascha herself. She informed me that a sledge had arrived to carry me off on a visit to a family, and that I must get up and be dressed, as my father and mother were at the house expecting me. I was dressed in my Sunday clothes. duly washed and combed, and then packed into the sledge beside Parascha. Roused suddenly from the deep sleep of childhood, nervous and timid by disposition, and startled by an experience which was entirely new to me. I was whisked through the deserted streets of the city, my heart beating tumultuously and my mind haunted by a presentiment of something frightful. At last we arrived at our destination. Parascha took off my wraps in the servants' ante-chamber, and once more whispered her off-reiterated exhortation.

GYMNASIUM: FIRST PERIOD

that I was not to be frightened. She then took my hand and led me to the door of the salon, a manservant opened it, and I walked into the room. The light of many candles and the sound of many voices confused me so, that I remained rooted on the threshold. The first person who observed me was my father, who exclaimed: "There is the recruit himself!" I was still more confounded. "Capital!" roared a mighty voice, and a man of great stature rose from his easy-chair and advanced towards me. I was in such a fright (for I understood the sinister import of these words) that, well-nigh crazy with terror, I tried to run away. The loud laughter of all present caused me to make a halt; but my mother had no taste for this sort of fun; her maternal heart revolted against her child's terror being made into a joke; she ran to me and with embraces and caresses assured me there was nothing of which I need be afraid: and after I had cried a little. I grew gradually composed and at my ease. I must now explain to the reader where I had been brought. This was the house of some old friends of my parents, named Maxim Dimitrijevitsch Knäschevitsch and Jelisaveta Alexeievna Knäschevitscha, who had formerly resided at Ufa for many years, where Maxim Dimitrijevitsch had been a colleague of my father in the Supreme Court. From thence he had been transferred, still as a State Agent, to Kazan. Maxim Dimitrijevitsch had come to Russia from Serbia, when quite a young man. He had first been admitted to the Chevalier-Guard, and subsequently was appointed State Agent to the Supreme Court in Ufa. Although his outward appearance and bearing, coupled with his great height and stern features, gave him somewhat of a fierce and forbidding aspect, he was really very gentle and kind hearted. His wife was a member of an aristocratic Russian family, an R-va by birth. This couple's house at Kazan was distinguished by an inscription written in purest Slavonian above their door: "A Welcome here to all Good Folks!" We had frequently visited the Knäschevitsches when they lived in Ufa, and I and my sister had been accustomed to play with their elder boys, Dimitri and Alexander, who were present on this occasion. But so far I had not recognised them. But while my mother was explaining all this to me, and reminding me of our former

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friends, I suddenly exclaimed: "Why, Mamma, there are the Knäschevitsch boys who shewed me how to crack walnuts with my forehead!" This remark aroused universal laughter. My shyness had quite vanished, and I renewed my acquaintance with my old friends, who were now wearing green uniforms with red collars. I was informed that they were pupils at the Kazan Gymnasium, and were going to return there in an hour or so. This happened on a Sunday, the voung Knäschevitsches being permitted to spend this day with their parents from morning until eight o'clock at night. But I soon grew tired, and as I listened to the conversation around me. I was nodding off to sleep when, suddenly, the following words smote on my childish ear, and all my drowsiness was instantly dissipated by fear: "Yes, my dear Timofei Stepanovitsch and most honoured Maria Nikolaievna." Maxim Dimitrijevitsch was saving in a very earnest and pressing tone, "do take the advice of a friend, and send your little Sergei to the Gymnasium. I have a special reason for giving you this advice, because he appears to be a regular mother's darling. His mother is spoiling him and bringing him up to be too soft and effeminate. It's time the lad had some education. In Ufa there is no teacher except Matviei Vasilievitsch at the primary school, and he knows nothing at all. And now that you are going to live entirely in the country. you won't even have the benefit of a Matviei Vasilievitsch." My father quite agreed with his friend; but my mother. terrified at the idea of being separated from her treasure. turned quite pale, and replied very agitatedly that I was far too young; that I had a very weak constitution (which was, in part, true); and that I was so attached to her that she could not consent to any sudden parting. I sat there in a condition which more resembled death than life, and was quite unable to understand a word of what followed. At ten o'clock supper was served, but neither I nor my mother could swallow a mouthful. At last we were conveyed home in the same sledge which had taken me to the Knäschevitsches' house. As we lay down in bed and I, as was my custom, embraced my mother and clung to her breast, we both began to weep and sob violently. With the exception of the words: "Mamma. don't send me to the Gymnasium!" uttered with a voice

strangled by sobs, I could say nothing. My mother never ceased weeping, and I fear my father got but little sleep for long enough. At last my mother announced her determination not to be parted from me at any price and, towards morning, we fell asleep.

We did not remain long in Kazan. Later, I heard that my father and the Knäschevitsches had tried to persuade my mother to let me enter the Kazan Gymnasium at once as a State Alumnus, urging as a reason for this that there was now a vacancy, which would probably be filled later. My mother, however, would take none of their advice; but said that she must have a year at the very least in order to reconcile herself to parting with me and to accustom me to the idea. All this, however, was kept a secret from me, and I thought that the horrible idea had been quite set aside.

We returned first to Simbirsk, travelling with our own horses, where we brought away my sister and brother; and then crossed the Volga back to New-Aksakovo1 where my newly-born sister Annuschka had been left at home. This winter's journey with our own horses along the country roads of the Ufa of those times—where one might travel for ten versts without passing a single house-still remains such a sinister memory of mine that my heart almost stops beating when I recall it. The road was nothing but a cart track, the sledges were exposed to the full blast of the snow showers, and the least breath of wind filled them with drifted snow. Along such roads one was forced to be dragged along by peasants' horses seven hours at a stretch, as the places where one halted to feed and water the animals were separated by distances of thirty-five versts and more. And who had measured these versts! What rousing at midnight, when one had rested at a wayside station: what waking of sleeping children, wrapping them in furs, and laying them in the vehicle! The creak of the sledges over the hard snow irritated my sensitive nerves, and during the first twenty-four hours I suffered from violent sickness. 'The time spent in peasants' smoky hovels-where sometimes we slept part of the night or waited while the horses were baited-herded together with

sucking pigs, lambs and calves—the dirt—the evil odours— God deliver anyone from even dreaming of such horrors! It is needless to dwell upon the snow-storms, during which we were frequently detained for a couple of days in some miserable village, and had to wait there until the weather cleared. The hideous recollection! But at last we reached my beloved Aksakovo, and all our sufferings were forgotten! Then began again that blissful life at my mother's side. Once more I read aloud to her from the pages of my favourite books, Tales adapted to Children's Intelligence and Minds and even Hippocrene, or Entertaining Lessons in Grammar. Nothing new indeed, but always with renewed enjoyment. I also recommenced my recitation of lines from Sumarokov's dramas. in which I especially loved to act the part of a messenger. binding a broad belt round my waist, in which a window-bar was stuck to do duty as a sword. I also began to play again with my little sister whom I adored, and with my little brother, and romped and danced with them on the floor, spread with a double layer of cosy, snow-white Kalmuck felt rugs. I began once more to teach my sister to read. At first she was somewhat slow and lazy, and naturally I was not a very experienced teacher, although a very zealous one. I remember very well how impossible I found it to explain clearly to my six-year-old pupil how one could form the letters of the alphabet into complete words. At last I grew so puzzled with the whole affair that I sat down on a stool in the corner and wept aloud. In reply to my mother's enquiry as to what I was crying about, I replied: "Little sister can't understand anything!" I also took my darling cat to bed with me again. She was quite devoted to me, and would follow me everywhere, just like a little dog. I caught little birds with snares and kept them in an empty room, and soon collected quite an aviary in this way. I sent for my pigeons, all tufted and scaly-footed, which, during my absence, had been tended by some of the servants and kept close to the stove in this or that room to protect them from the cold. I watched the falconers killing pigeons and magpies to feed the hawks, with which we hunted in the summer time. The days were not long enough for all these delights! The winter passed and Everything was green and blossoming. the spring came.

and a crowd of new and still more entrancing joys thronged upon me. Oh, the clear waters of the river, the mill, the pond. the little rookery, the island (embraced on each side by the Old and New Buguruslans) with its shady lime and birchen groves, where I raced and ran twice daily-I could not have told you why! Often have I stood there motionless—as if enchanted—my heart beating loudly in my bosom, scarcely breathing! But my greatest delight was fishing, and under the guidance of my attendant, Yefrem Yevseyitsch, I surrendered myself wholly to this occupation, forgetful of everything else. The clear deep Buguruslan flowed immediately under the windows of our bedroom and was swarming with fish. This room, built of rough planks, was a sort of annexe to the old house, and had been specially erected by my late grandfather, in order that his daughter-in-law should have a room of her own. Close to the window grew a thick, bushy birch tree, which drooped over the water. One of its sturdy . branches was bent and bowed into a shape somewhat resembling an armchair, and I loved to sit there with my sister. But the current of the Buguruslan has undermined the tree's roots: it has grown old before its time, and has sunk down on one side: still it lives and puts forth green leaves in spring. The new owner of the place has planted a fresh tree beside it.

Where are you now, O land of faery, O enchanted days of life, too often rudely and barbarously wrenched from us by those older than ourselves, by their jeers and unkind explanations! O golden time of childish happiness, what sweet sadness your memory rouses even in an old man's heart! Happy he who has lived through such blissful days and can keep the remembrance of them forever! But too many of us live through this happiest time, indifferent or unhappy; and old age retains only the recollection of the coldness or cruelty of mankind.

That summer was spent in an intoxicating trance of happiness with never a suspicion of evil to come. But in the autumn, when I began to sit more at home and to see more of my mother and listen to her conversation, I was struck by a great change in her countenance. Her beautiful eyes expressed a peculiar and secret sorrow. I often saw tears standing in them, which she always strove to hide. I was

greatly disturbed and distressed to see her so unhappy, and entreated her, with all manner of caresses and endearments, to tell me the reason of her grief. At first she only tried to reassure me, and told me nothing was the matter: but soon I gathered from what she said to me that she was grieving because there was no one there to educate me. Education was indispensable in the case of a boy: she would rather die than have her children grow up ignorant; a man had to fulfil his mission in life, and, in order to do so, he must be educated. Something clutched at my heart as I listened to her: I knew only too well what her words foreboded: that the old danger had not passed away, it had merely been set aside; and that I could not escape the fell Gymnasium at Kazan! My mother confirmed my suspicions and told me she had at last made up her mind; and I knew that her resolve could not be changed. For several days after this I could do nothing but weep: I would listen to nothing, nor choose to understand anything of what my mother said to me. But at last a change was wrought; her tears, her prayers, her sensible, kindly, affectionate persuasion, and her oft-spoken desire that I should become an educated and cultured manall grew intelligible to my childish brain; and I, sorrowfully and with a bleeding heart, resigned myself to my fate. Of a sudden all my rustic delights lost all charm for me: I felt no desire to pursue any of them farther; all were strange to me, all indifferent. Only my love for my mother increased to such a degree that I fairly quailed at the thought of it. Some hasty preparation was necessary for my entry into school life. I could read as well for my age as might be expected, but my writing was very childish and unformed. My father, once upon a time, had undertaken to impart his mathematical knowledge to me, that is to say the first four rules of arithmetic; but I had proved myself such a dull and slow pupil that he had soon given up his self-imposed task. But since that change in me of which I have made mention, I learnt the first four simple rules in a couple of months; and out of all the arithmetic and mathematics of my later years, these four rules are all that I can remember. During the time remaining before our departure for Kazan, my father assisted me with arithmetic only. I had attained to a reasonable

degree of skill in writing copies. All my studies I performed under my mother's supervision, and solely according to her wish and will. She told me she should die of shame if I failed to pass the examination in these subjects which were necessary before I could be admitted to the Gymnasium; but she added she was convinced that I should succeed-and that was enough. I never quitted her for an instant. In vain she told me to go out for a walk, or to visit the hawks and pigeons. I went nowhere, and had only one reply: "I don't want to go, Mamma." With the idea of accustoming me to the thought of parting, my mother was incessantly discussing the Gymnasium and my future education with me. She wished me to go on to Moscow later, and to enter the State College for the sons of the aristocracy, to which her two brothers had been admitted direct from Ufa, entirely through her own efforts when a seventeen-year-old girl. My mind had been developed in advance of my age. I had read a great many books to myself, and had read still more aloud to my mother; and the contents of these books were quite beyond my years. To this must be added the circumstance of my mother being my sole companion; and everyone knows the effect of an adult's companionship on the development of a childish mind. when she spoke to me of the great advantages possessed by the educated over the ignorant, I understood perfectly what was meant. As she was more than ordinarily intelligent, possessed a marvellous gift of speech, and could express her thoughts with the most fervent and enchanting eloquence, she gained such a complete supremacy over my whole being and inspired me with such high courage and such a desire to fulfil her wishes and hopes that I actually awaited the time of our journey to Kazan with impatience. My mother bore up bravely, and appeared even cheerful; but her efforts cost her dear! Each day she grew thinner and more sallow; she never wept, but frequently shut herself alone in her room to pray. Ah, this was a veritable triumph of that boundless, unselfish, self-sacrificing passion—a mother's love! Oh, how had my mother manifested her love for me! In earlier years I had been a poor, sickly child, and she had spent whole years beside my sick bed. How and when she had slept, no one could ever tell, for no hand but hers had ever tended me. In days

hereafter this brave woman dared to cross the hideous, blue, splintering ice of the already half-thawed Kama, when everyone declared it too dangerous for a passage and it threatened to crack every instant, because she knew that I lay in hospital, pining away with homesickness. But all these labours of love were nothing in comparison with what the cost was to her, when she resolved to send her darling, cherished, delicate, idolised, nine-year-old son as a State pupil to the Kazan Gymnasium, four hundred versts distant, simply and solely because there was no other means of his receiving any education.

Winter had come round again, and in December we set out once more for Kazan. In order that my mother should be less lonely and desolate on the return journey, she acceded to my father's earnest request that my dear, elder sister should accompany us. My brother and younger sister remained at Aksakovo in charge of my aunt, Yevgenia Stepanovna,1 Arrived at Kazan, we alighted at our old lodgings with the wife of Captain Aristovo. We had been in correspondence with Maxim Dimitrijevitsch Knäschevitsch and already knew that there was a vacancy for a State pensioner in the Gymnasium; and all the necessary documents for my entrywere ready-prepared. Through Knäschevitsch's kind offices. my father had been introduced to all the personages who were in any way connected with my admission to the college. and a fortnight after our arrival, he set off to lay his petition before the Director, Peken, after offering up a fervent prayer to God.

The Committee of the Gymnasium commissioned the Chief Inspector, Nikolai Ivanovitsch Kamascheff, to examine me and Dr. Benis to make a report upon my health. Kamascheff was absent, so the Inspector of the "nobles classroom," Vasili Petrovitsch Upadyschevski, was undertaking his duties, while the head professor of Russian literature, Lyov Semyonovitsch Levizki, was taking duty for the Inspector of Education. Both were honourable and kindhearted men; and later, Upadychevski proved himself a veritable guardian angel for me and my mother; in fact I dare not think what might have happened, had it not been

¹ Tatiana, or Tania Stepanova of The Family Chronicle. [Tr.

for this worthy old man. When my father went to visit the Director and make his petition, he took me with him, and the great man actually caressed me. Levizki was ill and unable to attend the Gymnasium, so my father took me to his house. Lyov Semjonovitsch was a very amiable, jolly, rosy-cheeked, stout gentleman, who, although still young, boasted quite a sizeable "corporation." We were both charmed by the way in which he greeted us. Me he kissed and caressed, gave me prose from Karamzin's and verses from Dimitriev's Works to read, and was quite delighted to find that I could read with real expression and intelligence. Next I had to write something, and again he was in raptures. Finally I acquitted myself very honourably in the four first rules of arithmetic (but here Levizki, as a true philologist, seized the opportunity to belittle all mathematical lore). At the conclusion of the examination he bestowed the most unstinted praise upon me. and vowed that he was astonished that a boy of my age, who had been brought up in the country, should be so advanced. "Who has taught him to write copies so excellently well?" enquired Lyov Semjonovitsch of my father, with a goodnatured laugh: "Your own writing is not remarkably good. is it?" Overjoyed at the compliments paid to his son and nearly moved to tears of delight, my father simply replied that I had learnt everything voluntarily and under the sole guidance of my mother, from whom I was practically inseparable: he himself had only taught me to count. He went on to say that my mother had always lived in a Government city, that we had but recently gone to live in the country, that she was the daughter of a former highly-placed official, and a great lover of books and poetry. "Ah, now I begin to understand where this little son of yours has got the stamp of civilization and a certain amount of real culture, too," exclaimed Levizki, "here we have the effects of feminine influence, the fruits of an accomplished mother's labour." We left the house quite enchanted by our reception. Dr. Benis, who lived in a fine house in Lyadskaia Street, likewise received us very politely and unhesitatingly pronounced me to be of a strong and sound constitution. When we returned to our lodgings, I perceived at once that my mother had been crying a great deal, although her eyes

possessed the peculiarity of never retaining any dimness nor the slightest trace of tears. My father gave her a glowing account of all that had taken place that morning. My mother cast an expressive glance at me which I shall never forget—no, not if I live for a hundred years. She threw her arms round me, and said: "My joy! my pride!" What more had I to desire? In addition I was pleased on my own account, proud, and full of hope.

My mother paid a visit to Dr. Benis's wife and thus became acquainted with the Doctor himself. It would have been a hard task to refrain from sympathising with my mother, so young, so beautiful, so intelligent, and so sorrowful was The Doctor and his wife both took a great fancy to her, and the former promised her faithfully that, at the least sign of any indisposition, I should have the full benefit of his medical skill. I listened to this promise with feelings of horror. expecting to be dosed terrifically on the slightest pretext; but the assurance had the effect of somewhat consoling and comforting my poor mother. . . . Vasili Petrovitsch Upadyschevski was a widower, and two of his own sons were State pupils at the Kazan Gymnasium. My father, having made his acquaintance, invited him to visit us at our lodgings. This good old man was so charmed by my mother's personality and so well able to appreciate her devoted love for her child, that at his first meeting with her, he gave her his word of honour, first that he would admit me to the "nobles classroom" at the end of a week (for should I-a totally unknown boy-be admitted there straightaway, it would be considered too-open favouritism), secondly, that he would look after me exactly as if I were one of his own "gallows birds," as he called his sons. Both of these promises he fulfilled to the letter. I see him now as clearly as if to-day-his kind and friendly countenance, and his right arm round which a broad black band was bound. His right hand had been blown off by the explosion of a cannon and was replaced by a black glove, stuffed with wadding, which was attached to his arm by a bandage. He could write very well and distinctly with his left hand.

At length all the formalities were completed, and the Committee decided that I was to be admitted to the Gymnasium

as a State pupil. My measures were taken in order that my uniform and outfit might be prepared. The state of tension in which both my mother and myself were thrown underwent no change. We all went to the Cathedral and offered up prayers to the miracle-working saints of Kazan. Guri, Varsonofi, and Germain. From thence my father and mother took me direct to the Gymnasium, and handed me over to Monsieur Upadyschevski, my guardian, Yefrem Yevseyitsch remaining with me as my personal attendant. Farewell naturally was said with many tears, blessings, and much good advice, but was not especially distressing. I arrived at ten o'clock in the forenoon; the classes were just being changed,1 and all the pupils were upstairs in the classrooms. The dormitories, which were downstairs, were empty. and my mother was able to inspect them: she was even shewn the bed in which I was to sleep; she appeared to be quite satisfied with all that she saw. As soon as my parents had taken their departure. Upadyschevski took my hand and conducted me to the writing class, presented me to the teacher. describing me as a very promising pupil, and asked him to give special attention to me. I was set down at a table with some other new-comers and ordered to practice making strokes from a copy. My mind was in such a tumult that I fell into a state of self-oblivion; everything seemed like a dream; and I felt neither grief nor timidity. After dinner, of which I recollect nothing, I was dressed in a uniform jacket, a cloth cravat was tied round my throat, my hair was cropped quite short, and then I was placed, according to my height, in a string of pupils, who were told off in couples (I stood beside a boy called Vladimir Gray), and drilled in marching exercises. I copied the others mechanically, still in a sort of trance. When the exercise was over. Upadyschevski met me at the door, and saying, "Your mother is waiting for you," took me to the reception room, where my father and mother were seated, As soon as my father caught sight of me, he burst out laughing,

¹ Morning school began at eight o'clock in winter; at ten the tutors exchanged classes; at twelve lessons ended; and at half-past one we had dinner. During summer school began at seven and ended at eleven o'clock, and we dined punctually at twelve. Afternoon school always began at two and ended at six o'clock. We had our supper at eight o'clock in the evening, and went to bed at nine. We rose at five o'clock in summer and six in the winter.

and said: "Ei! how they have dressed up our Sergei!" My mother, who at first had not recognised me, clasped her hands, groaned, and sank to the ground in a swoon. I was nearly beside myself, and flung myself, shrieking, at her feet. Upadyschevski, who had witnessed the scene through the half-opened door, was alarmed, and ran for assistance. My mother remained unconscious for about half-an-hour to the great terror of my father and poor Upadyschevski. latter was so frightened that he sent to the sanatorium for the resident physician. Dr. Ritter, who prepared a draught for my mother and gave me some medicine as well. When my mother came to herself again, she was in a very weak state; and the kind old Upadyschevski himself proposed that I should return home with her and stay all night at the lodgings. "If it's God's will that Nikolai Ivanovitsch" (the Head Inspector) "is angry with me when he returns and hears all about this breach of the rules, which he would never permit under any circumstances whatever-well so be it! I take the entire responsibility upon myself. Now, please bring him back to-morrow morning punctually at seven o'clock, in time for breakfast!" We could not find words to express our gratitude to the good man, and repaired to our lodgings. mother's mood changed as soon as she got back: she was calm, and her example calmed and encouraged me. She succeeded in bringing herself to regard my closely-cropped head (where her caressing hand in vain sought my waving golden curls) with composure, and endured the sight of my coarse neckcloth, which chafed my tender skin, and my brandnew silk pocket handkerchief. She realised that all these changes were a necessary part of my new life, and accepted the situation. Our mutual firmness and resolution filled us both with renewed courage. The next day I arrived punctually at seven o'clock at the Gymnasium. My mother came twice daily to visit me, at twelve o'clock for half-an-hour before dinner, and then again at six o'clock in the evening, when we had another half-hour together. During these interviews she was quite composed and even cheerful; but I gathered from my father's woe-begone countenance that things were very different at home, when I was not there to be upset. After a time my father came to the conclusion that this state

of things could not possibly continue—that all these daily visits and adieux were but prolonging our sufferings and causing unnecessary pain. He asked Knäschevitsch's advice and together they decided that my mother must return home without farther delay. It was a simple matter for them to decide upon this step—the carrying-out of it was the great difficulty, as my father knew only too well. Contrary however to his expectations and greatly to his relief, my mother promptly consented to act as they jointly advised. The advice of Dr Benis. who quite approved of the plan, no doubt had great weight with her, when making her decision. He pointed out to her that these numerous interviews were very trying for my overwrought nerves, and indeed very injurious to my health: and that if my mother persisted in remaining in the city. I should either never be reconciled to my new life, or only with the greatest difficulty and suffering. Good old Upadyschevski likewise begged her most earnestly to go, telling her that she was hindering my progress and causing the tutors to have a poor opinion of me. So at last my mother made up her mind to leave on the following day. One thing alone surprises me—that she ever should have brought herself to deceive me. Before dinner that day she told me that she would be leaving next day or the day after, but we should see each other twice before her departure. She added that she was going to see Madame Knäschevitsch that evening, and therefore could not come to the Gymnasium. A secret departure without any leave taking—such was the unfortunate scheme suggested by Benis and Upadyschevski. Their sole aim was to spare both of us, and especially myself, the agony of a last parting. But they reckoned falsely. The unhappy consequences of this well-intentioned piece of trickery were only too patent.

So, for the first time since our separation, my mother did not come to see me that evening; and although she had warned me beforehand not to expect her, my heart was filled with vague forebodings of some great sorrow that was threatening me. I slept badly that night. Next morning while I was dressing my servant Yevseyitsch handed me a note. It was from my mother, bidding me adieu. She wrote saying that if I loved her, and desired her peace of mind and body, I was

not to fret after her, but to apply myself diligently to my books. She had quitted Kazan the evening before at eight o'clock. How clearly I remember that moment-how impossible it is for me to even attempt to describe it! A spasm of anguish penetrated my breast, constricting my heart until I could not breathe. This was followed by furious palpitation. I seated myself, half-dressed as I was, on my bed, and gazed around in blank despair—hearing and seeing nothing. Upadyschevski, who had admitted me to the nobles' schoolroom two days previously, was aware of my mother's departure, and hearing of my condition, forbade the other pupils to take any notice of me, and hurried them upstairs with all possible speed, where he placed them under the charge of one of the Inspectors: and then hurried back to me. I was still seated, in the same attitude, on my bed, while Yevseyitsch was standing weeping beside me. Upadyschevski exhorted me in vain. I remained silent, for I heard nothing. I could not collect my thoughts; and my eyes, as I was afterwards told, were wild and staring. I was conveved to the sanatorium still unconscious of all that was happening: I seated myself upon a bed and sat there dumb and with a fixed gaze, as before. An hour passed thus, and then Dr. Benis arrived. He examined me, shook his head, and said something in French, which, as I heard later, was: "Pauvre enfant!" He made me swallow a draught, and ordered me to be undressed, laid in a bed, and rubbed with towels. Very soon a violent fit of ague and shuddering revived my consciousness. I uttered a loud cry: "Mamma has gone!" and the long pent-up tears streamed in a torrent from my eyes. Dr. Benis was visibly much relieved and, seating himself beside my bed, began to reason gently with me as to the imperative necessity for my mother's leaving me; how her health was affected, and what serious consequences any leave-taking might have had upon it; and that, knowing these circumstances, it behoved me to act like a good boy, who loved his mother and wished her to be comfortable and happy. His words were an inspiration from Heaven: for the doctor, honest man that he was, was no sentimental, weak-minded being. My tears flowed still faster, but my heart felt less oppressed. The doctor left me. I sobbed for two hours, until I fell asleep

out of pure weariness, and a healing slumber revived my feeble frame. Upadyschevski popped in to see me again, and brought The Children's Academy to amuse me, a book which I had never read. He knew how I loved reading; but I was in no humour for books. I asked for permission to write, and spent the rest of the day and all that evening writing to my father and mother, while my tears fell thick and fast. During the ensuing night I was very restless and constantly dreaming—a predisposition to dreams having always been very marked in my case. Yevseyitsch never stirred from my side. Next day Dr. Benis pronounced me much better: he ordered me to leave the sanatorium, as he considered lack of occupation and the company of invalids alike to be injurious for me in my present condition, and he advised that I should be set some short and simple tasks. Upadyschevski himself led me into the schoolroom, and I was first set to write copies and then sent into the Scripture class. For two hours I sat there listening, while my fellow pupils repeated their Catechism and recited portions of Bible history, and the priest set the new lesson, and explained and expounded all sorts of religious questions: but then, and indeed throughout the whole of my sojourn at the Gymnasium. I had not the slightest idea of what he was talking about. I could not repeat my lesson. The priest had been previously informed of my delicate condition, and although he was a severe and unfeeling man, he confined himself to a mild rebuke on this occasion, and told me to re-learn the lesson for the next time. After dinner, in order that I should not be left idle and give myself up to sorrowful reflections. Upadyschevski got one of the older pupils who could draw very well—Ivan Schevanov—to help me to draw, a pastime for which I had a great inclination in my childhood. I myself heard the kind, old man begging the boy to do him the great kindness-which he for his own part would never forget-to try to amuse the poor child, who was fretting after his mother, by shewing him how to draw. Schevanov took great pains with me; but his efforts were unavailing and only resulted in my losing all taste for drawing; those intolerable circles, eyebrows, noses, eyes, and mouths wearied me to death. After evening-school my good genius, Vasili Petrovitsch Upadyschevski, made me sit beside him to

study my task; and as he saw that I was in no humour to learn anything, he began to talk to me all about my home in the country and my father and mother; and allowed me to cry, just a little. I cannot tell how my future life would have shaped itself, but suddenly matters took an entirely new turn. On the third day, while we were seated at dinner. Yevseyitsch gave me another note from my mother. She wrote that she had so bitterly regretted not having said Good-bye to me that she had turned back, after proceeding for ninety versts. and had returned to Kazan to see me once again, if only for a moment. I cannot pretend to explain how it was that just at first I felt none of that intense joy which anyone would naturally have expected of me. On the contrary, I experienced a sort of terror. I could not believe the news was true and thought I was only dreaming. Upadyschevski had likewise received a note from my mother, who begged his consent to my spending part of that evening, from six to nine o'clock, with her; if that were not possible, she would come to the Gymnasium herself. She added she was leaving Kazan the following day. Upadyschevski ordered me to write and say that Maria Nikolaievna was not to trouble herself to come, as I and my servant would probably arrive at her lodgings before six o'clock—the tutor who took the last lesson in the afternoon having fallen ill—and I had permission to remain with her until seven o'clock the next morning. I wrote all this to my mother, still firmly convinced that it was all a dream. Yevsevitsch hurried off with the letter. At the end of half-an-hour he returned with a reply which breathed such intense joy and such warm gratitude to Upadyschevski that the old man shed tears while reading it. Yevsevitsch told us that the noble Maria Nikolaievna had returned alone from the village of Alexeievskoia, situated on the high road. ninety versts distant from Kazan: the master and his sick daughter were waiting there for her to rejoin them. mother had travelled in a light post-sleigh with post-horses, accompanied only by her maid and one manservant. At last I began to believe in and realise my great happiness, and to believe it so well that the last hour of school was well-nigh unendurable. The ailing tutor sent word that he would not be able to come to take his class, and at five minutes past

five, I and my servant jumped into a sleigh-droshky, where I sat nearly beside myself with indescribable rapture. mother was staying in Prolomnaia Street, I don't recollect with whom, but it was not at an inn. As I rushed into the room, I caught sight of her so white and thin sitting wrapped in a warm pelisse, beside the lighted stove, as the place was very cold. This moment of our reunion was such that I am quite unable to give even the faintest hint of it! Never in my whole life, have I lived through such instants of rapturous bliss! For some time we could not speak, and could only weep for joy. But not for long. Soon, too soon, the thought of the near and inevitable parting scared away all other thoughts and sensations, and contracted my heart with agony. With scalding tears I told my mother all that I had suffered. owing to her secret departure. I was alarmed at the effect of my disclosures. My poor mother reproached herself most bitterly, and most sorrowfully lamented that she should ever have consented to deceive me and leave without bidding me Farewell! Then she told me her own story. She had no clear recollection of how she quitted Kazan, as she was taken ill as soon as she was placed in the sledge. The farther she journeyed from the city, the worse she grew hour by hour. She would have turned back sooner, as her longing to see me grew more intense as time went on, but my father's advice and her own prudence kept her maternal love under control for a while. Suddenly she resolved to battle against her own heart no longer, and returned alone, because she feared that my sister, who was ailing, would not be able to bear the trying journey. My father and sister were waiting for her at Alexeievskoia, as such a halt was imperative for my sister's health. We spent the whole of the evening and the greater part of the night talking and weeping together; but as everything has its limits, we took, as one might truly say, our fill of tears, and finally fell asleep. I recollect that I often wandered in my sleep and began to sob; but my mother would take me in her arms, press my head to her breast, and I would fall asleep again. We were awakened at six o'clock. We both were more composed and quiet. My mother promised to come again to Kazan as soon as the road was passable in the summer, and to remain in the city until the end of the

examinations. After Speech Day, which always took place early in July, she would take me home where I should stay until the middle of August. A feeling of consolation filled my heart, and we took leave of each other comparatively calmly. Punctually at seven o'clock my mother got into her postsleigh, while I and Yevsevitsch bundled into a sledge-droshky, and the two vehicles left the courtyard together. The postsleigh turned to the right in the direction of the turnpike. while we went to the left towards the Gymnasium. Very soon we turned down a side street and my mother's sleigh vanished from my sight. My heart was nearly broken and, as anyone will guess, grief lay heavy upon my soul; but my brain was not in the least confused. I realised quite clearly all that was happening around me and all that awaited me in the future. The massive white building of the Gymnasium, which stood upon rising ground, with its pale green roofs and cupola of the same tint, soon came into view, and startled me just as if I were observing it for the first time. To me it seemed a veritable and fearful enchanted castle (such as those of which I had read) and a fortress in which I was to be imprisoned. The great door, flanked by columns, above which a lofty balcony was suspended, which was opened by an old pensioner, and which seemed to engulf me: the two wide and stately staircases which led from the ground floor to the second and third storeys, which were lighted from the dome above: the hubbub and clamour of many voices which resounded from the classrooms in the distance, the tutors not having yet arrived; all this I saw, heard, and comprehended for the first time. Although I had dwelt beneath its roof for more than a week, I knew nothing whatever of the Gymnasium. And now I realised that I was a State pupil in this majestic institute of education. For the whole day I marvelled at all around me, as at something quite new and hitherto unknown-and my God! how hateful it all was! The morning bell, which roused us long before dawn; dressing by extinguished or dying night lamps and tallow candles. which filled the dormitories with an insufferable odour; the perishing cold1 of the chamber itself, which made rising still

¹ The temperature of the dormitories was kept at 12 degrees of heat, which, it would seem, is the present degree of warmth permitted in all

harder for a poor child, who had slept none too warmly under his frieze coverlet: the ablutions in a few brass wash-hand basins, to gain possession of which one had to fight and struggle; the marching in order to prayers, breakfast, school dinner, and so forth; the breakfast, which on ordinary days consisted of a glass of milk (more than half of which was water) and a roll; while on fast days a glass of Sbiten¹ was substituted for the "milk"; and in like manner the dinner with its three, and supper with its two, dishes what an experience for a delicate, much-indulged boy, whose mother had brought him up in the same luxury as an heir to some great fortune! But what drove me to the greatest desperation was my own schoolfellows. The older boys of the Upper and Middle Schools took no notice of me; but the pupils of the Lower School, who were my own age and even younger, proved themselves for the most part intolerable cads and bullies. Moreover between me and them there was so little in common and so little sympathy—our views. pursuits, and habits being so totally opposite—that I never became intimate with anyone, and remained lonely in the midst of this great crowd. All were strong, hearty, contented. and unbearably jolly; and I could not discover a solitary pensive or thoughtful child amongst them, who could have sympathised with me in my sorrow. Oh, how I should have fallen on such an one's neck and disclosed my most secret griefs to him. "How very strange!" I reflected. "Evidently none of these poor boys has either a father or mother, brothers, sisters, nor yet a house and garden in the country," and I began to feel pity for them. But soon enough I heard that nearly all of them had parents and families, and many of them had houses and gardens in the country too. But they were lacking entirely in that peculiar feeling of attachment to home and family which was so strongly implanted in my being. It goes without saving that I was very soon known as a "sickly little noodle," and as a "Mammy's darling," who was always "whimpering for his Ma"; and very soon became

Government educational institutions, and which to my mind is very injurious to the children's health. The temperature should be at least fourteen degrees.

A drink composed of water, honey, and spices. [Tr. H.R.]

the butt of all their gibes and tricks; and neither the authority nor the moral influence of Vasili Petrovitsch Upadyschevski was of any service or protection, although the kind old man never ceased to befriend me, day or night. He himself forbade me ever to complain of the insults of my schoolfellows, for he knew-none better-how thoroughly a sneak is detested by his comrades, and how he who tells tales of his schoolfellows' bullying to a superior is branded as an outcast. He had my hed placed between those of Kondyrev and Moreiev, boys who besides being considerably older than myself, were very steady and intellectual. I was placed under the protection of these two pupils and, thanks to them, none of the little rascals dare come near my bed. I must here remark that in those days we had no recreation rooms, and the State pupils and pensioners spent all the time out of school in the dormitories

During the days immediately following my actual parting with my mother I studied with great zeal and application. After first asking Upadyschevski's permission, I begged my tutor to give me two or three exercises at a time, intead of the customary one, so that I might catch up with the older scholars and not have to sit on a bench with the new-comers. Intelligence and memory were both highly developed in me; at the end of a month I had not only overtaken and left the new pupils behind me, but I sat on the first bench among the head-pupils in every subject. This circumstance only served to make me still more disliked by those whom I had outstripped, as well as by those to whose ranks I had been promoted.

Just at this time the Chief Inspector, Nikolai Ivanovitsch Kamaschev, returned to his duties. I do not know whether he had any just claim to his reputation of a very superior man. One thing is certain, however, he was a very harsh, severe individual, with a derisive and sneering manner, and his acts betrayed the most obstinate tyranny. Everyone, without exception, feared him a great deal more than the Director. He loved personal authority, had studied how to obtain it, and exercised it with pedantic strictness. Upadyschevski perceived that Nikolai Ivanovitsch was very much annoyed with him; the latter had immediately made himself

acquainted with any breaches of school discipline, and had discovered that during his absence his deputy had granted me and my mother too great indulgence: namely, unreasonable visits from parents, for which certain days and hours were appointed, and irregular leave of absence for visits, especially leave to remain overnight from school In fact the Head Inspector administered such a severe rebuke to my benefactor that the old man was quite downcast for long after it. Kamaschev remarked, with his cold smile, that should such a circumstance occur again, he would be compelled to request the much-respected Vasili Petrovitsch to resign his position at the Gymnasium. I cried bitterly when I heard of the affair, and contracted an invincible dislike for the Chief Inspector; the mere mention of his name put me in a frightand not without reason. He could not endure me, treated me with great harshness, and my poor mother was fated to shed many, many tears later, thanks to his tyranny. Three days after his return. Kamaschev called me out into the middle of the room and read me a long lecture and exhortation, to the effect that a spoilt child was a contemptible creature: that it was a mean and unworthy thing to profit by the partiality and kindliness of a superior and to set the rules of the Committee at defiance, when they had taken upon themselves the entire and not inconsiderable cost of my education. I might be a mild and good-hearted boy, but my disposition was far too sensitive and impulsive. I stood during this tirade with downcast eyes: and a feeling-hitherto unknown-of undeserved insult, mingled with growing wrath, raged in my "Why do you not look at me?" asked Kamaschev, suddenly, "it is a bad sign when a boy looks down and darenot, or will not, look his superiors in the face. Look at me!" he repeated in a stern tone, raising his voice as he spoke. stared at him, and my gaze betrayed such a feeling of injured childish pride that Kamaschev turned away, and as he left the room remarked to Upadyschevski: "He certainly is not the mild, inoffensive boy you take him to be!" I heard afterwards. that the worthy Chief Inspector had ordered me to be removed from the nobles' classroom: he had demanded a report from every tutor and inspector, but each had declared my: "Conduct and industry exemplary: school work excellent"; and

so Monsieur Kamaschev had been, perforce, compelled to leave me in my original place. During the whole period of my first term at the Gymnasium he was continually interrupting my studies by demanding to see my books and copies: he used to order the teachers to question me in his presence, and not infrequently would rebuke me for the most trifling slips. He instructed his subordinates to force me to play with the other pupils, as he declared he would not tolerate any humbug or eccentricity. Now I can comprehend that such remarks are frequently quite unheeded by those to whom they are spoken; but it was not so in my case; and my rooted dislike and irritation were only greatly enhanced by this treatment. Upadyschevski was exceedingly fond of me, and every day would look after my dress and bed, just like some solicitous mother: while he encouraged me to keep my hands and copy books clean. He often advised me to look Nikolai Ivanovitsch straight in the face, and not to take offence at any of his rebukes or comments. And, out of regard for the old man. I tried my best to do as he bade me.

Kamaschev permitted no slackness. The rules of the Gymnasium prohibited any pupil from having any money or property of any sort in his possession; in the case of money, that was handed to a special Inspector for safe-keeping and was doled out solely at the discretion of the Chief Inspector. The purchase of eatables and confectionery was strictly forbidden; of course this rule was frequently broken, but always with the greatest secrecy. One of the strictest existing rules concerned our correspondence with our parents and other relations, which was under the supervision of the Inspectors. Each pupil was obliged to hand his letters—unsealed—to the Inspector of his classroom, and the latter had the right to read the letter, if he did not trust the writer. This rule was very frequently ignored, but Kamaschev instructed Upadyschevski to shew him all my letters. The good old fellow. who never even looked at my letters, except when he occasionally wrote a couple of lines to my mother on the same sheet, was forced to conceal his vexation and constitute himself my most unwilling censor. The first letter of mine that he read put him in a state of great perturbation; he had to wade through a long description of my miserable daily life;

endless complaints of my schoolfellows, not omitting a good many of the tutors; and passionate expressions of my fervent wish to see my mother again, to leave the detested Gymnasium, and to return home for the summer holidays. There was nothing in the letter that was of the least consequence, but Vasili Petrovitsch knew that every word of it would be a crime in the eyes of Nikolai Ivanovitsch, who would pronounce it a production full of unseemly complaints, accusations against superiors, slander of the institution, and ingratitude to the Committee! What was he to do? Reveal the actual state of affairs to me? Certainly not: it would amount to plotting with a pupil against the authorities. Besides he told himself I was quite incapable of understanding the situation, and equally incapable of composing a letter that would meet with Kamaschev's approval. It was equally impossible to think of depriving my mother of her sole consolation, this reading, the heartfelt outpourings of her darling. For a whole day he racked his brains over the question, without, as he himself afterwards told me, being able to find any way out of the difficulty. Finally he decided that on the one hand I must be told the truth, and on the other shewn how to deceive his severe superior. So it came about that I wrote a second letter dictated by him, a purely official document, which was duly shewn to the Chief Inspector, who could discover nothing in it which merited criticism or rebuke. Both letters were posted. The whole of my subsequent correspondence, as long as Kamaschev's censorship continued, was of this two-fold character, official and secret. Vasili Petrovitsch promptly informed my mother, in a letter of his own, how matters stood: and Yevsevitsch carried our letters to the post himself. At that time I was unable to value my benefactor's services at their full worth: but my mother appreciated them to the utmost, and wrote a letter to Upadyschevski, expressing the warmest sentiments of maternal gratitude. It is quite unnecessary to add that although at that time she was not acquainted with the full extent of Kamaschey's tyranny and oppression, still she was greatly angered by him.

Things proceeded as before; but a change came over me, all the more strange and unnatural, as it was to be expected that I should have grown reconciled and accustomed to my

new life after the lapse of one-and-a-half months. But I became melancholy and dejected; these fits of melancholy developed into periodic attacks of oppression of the heart, and finally into an illness. This unfortunate change was brought about by two causes. I had outstripped my fellow pupils in every single subject, and only needed to study a few matters, which were easily learnt before I was ready to quit the class. Hence I had nothing to occupy my mind, neither in nor out of school hours, and my mental activity, thus deprived of its necessary nourishment, was perpetually concentrated upon its earlier surroundings-eternally studying and picturing all that was happening at home, the yearnings of a desolate mother, and the remembrances of the happy Past. From the very depths of my soul I loathed the distasteful Gymnasium and all education; and built up a private theory of my own, to the effect that it-education-was entirely useless and unnecessary, besides turning all children into little ruffians, The second and probably chief cause of my indisposition was the bullying which I endured at the hands of Kamaschev. His very appearance was sufficient to send a violent shock through my nervous system. He came twice a day, and no one knew when to expect him. There was no hour of the day or night that he had not been known to select for one or other of his visits to the Gymnasium; and his raids were always sudden and unexpected. Now I can give him full credit for his unwearied—if too severe and pedantic—devotion to duty. but at that time he appeared to me a tyrant, a monster, an evil spirit—wandering about the earth and prying into corners. where the other Inspectors never so much as cast a glance. His terrifying figure never ceased to haunt my childish imagination, and I was never free from the feeling of his overwhelming presence. In consequence of this terror, my private letters to my mother grew shorter than before; and, as timewent on, became more cautious and reserved. At last I realised what an effect this deceit had cost a man of Upadyschevski's upright and honourable character, and what a dreadful risk he ran. And a third cause was yet to arise. Towards the end of March and the beginning of April the sun shone with great brilliance; the snow disappeared; streams of water flowed through the streets; there was a scent of

Spring in the air; and this scent touched chords in the heart of the child who, unknown to himself, already was a passionate lover of Nature. It is well known what tumultuous feelings are aroused in us by the play of the Spring sunbeams. Well can I remember how much more melancholy I felt on fine days than on grey ones. Be that as it may, in any case I began to give myself entirely up to my thoughts; or more strictly speaking, I ceased to listen to what anyone said. mechanically I learnt my tasks, repeated them, heard the tutor's praise or criticism as the case might be; and, even while I stood looking direct into his eyes, I was once more in my own beloved Aksakovo, in my father's quiet house, seated beside my darling mother. All around me simply mistook this for absence of mind. In order to enjoy my daydreams more intensely, as they became more vivid day by day, I would shut my eyes tightly, and not infrequently received a good thump from my neighbour, who fancied I had fallen asleep. Once, when we were studying Russian grammar, an odious boy of the name of Ruscha, yelled: "Aksakov is asleep!" The tutor enquired of several pupils if I really had been asleep, and as he received a unanimous reply in the affirmative, he forced me to apologise almost on my knees. After that I ceased closing my eyes during school hours: instead, I began to ask permission to leave the room on various pretexts, naturally after I had repeated my lesson. many a time have I stood, silent, for a full quarter of an hour in some secluded corner of the corridor, my eyes tightly shut, lost in some day-dream! At the conclusion of afternoon school it was usual for us to have half-an-hour's romp in the reception room, in which I very unwillingly joined. After that, each of us had to sit at a little table beside his bed and prepare his lessons for next day. Ah then, once seated, my book lying open before me, heedless of the loud murmur of my companions who were getting their tasks by heart—my fancy would carry me straight into the self-same spot in the beloved land, to my country-home on the banks of the Buguruslan. Soon, however, the growing strength of my imagination developed to such vast dimensions, that my weak bodily organisation was entirely overwhelmed by it. I began to be attacked by hysterical seizures, accompanied by

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such violent outbursts of weeping and sobbing that I would lose consciousness for several minutes I heard later that while I was thus unconscious, convulsive movements of my face were observed. At first I somehow managed to conceal my serious condition. This was done mechanically, or probably because I had a secret suspicion that I should be prevented from indulging in my beloved dreams, and thereby be deprived of my sole consolation in life. This depression of spirits nearly always came on in the evening. When I felt it approaching, I used to hurry out of the door at the rear of the building and into the inner court, where all the pupils were accustomed to repair at certain times. Here I would hide myself behind a pillar, or in the angle which was formed by the lofty flight of steps which led to the balcony along the facade of the building. Often I would run up the steps, and sit in a corner of the gallery outside the second floor, where a hanging lamp shed its feeble rays around. Probably the cool outside air would check the nervous attack, and I should return to my usual place in the class. But on one occasion I sought refuge in an empty classroom, when the servants were busy sweeping it. I do not know how it happened, but I hid myself under a table. I believe this attack lasted longer than its predecessors, no doubt owing to the lack of fresh air. One of the servants spied me and ordered me to leave the room; as, however, I remained speechless, he brought one of the Inspectors. The latter recognised me and sent word to Upadyschevski. The old man came hastily downstairs in a state of the deepest concern; but at that same moment I recovered my wits and returned quietly to my room with him. Up to this time Upadyschevski had been so pleased and hopeful about my two-months' residence and my progress in my studies that, although he had noticed my abstracted manner and absence of mind, he had paid but little attention to them. But now, as we walked off together, he began to ask me questions, which I answered quite candidly; and I told him all I knew about my own condition. Of course there was much which I could not understand, and much which I forgot to mention. That night he and my servant Yevseyitsch took it in turns to watch beside my bed, and I slept peacefully until morning. I must add that during the earlier period of my

distemper I invariably slept well of nights; I mention this because the illness took an entirely contrary turn during its latter period. The following morning Dr. Benis paid his accustomed visit to the sanatorium, whither I had been sent by Upadyschevski. The doctor questioned me closely and made a careful examination of me. He found me somewhat pale and thin, with an irregular pulse, but ordered me back to the class and prescribed no medicine. He said I was not to study so much (paying no attention whatever to my eager assurances that I found my work very easy): and said I was to be treated with great consideration, and on no account to be put out or crossed in any way. He added that I must report myself to him every morning at the hour of his usual visit to the sanatorium. Upadyschevski followed out all these instructions so long as I was in his company: during his absence he commissioned two of the pupils to keep a watchful eve on me, while my servant and guardian. Yevseyitsch, was ordered to accompany me whenever I visited the courtyard at the rear. Very soon a rumour spread through the whole Gymnasium: "Aksakov is an epileptic!" I heard it with horror, although I did not comprehend the sinister import of the words. This continual supervision of strangers over all my comings and goings was very distasteful to me; the whole evening I felt very dejected and out of humour. I had looked forward to revelling in my entrancing daydreams, but the knowledge that several eyes were observing me forbade my escaping from the dreary reality around me and surrendering myself to my own sweet fancy. In spite of this, the evening passed off very well; I was not depressed, nor in any way hysterical. Upadyschevski and my servant were much relieved; so was Dr. Benis the next morning, when he saw me at the sanatorium where Vasili Petrovitsch told him that the whole of the preceding day, including the night, I had been so quiet and comfortable. Although the doctor considered my pulse very unsatisfactory, he prescribed nothing. declaring that there was no reason for any alarm and that Nature would herself vanquish the disorder. However the next day it turned out that things were far from being so satisfactory as he had imagined; they had merely undergone a change; for during the arithmetic lesson (which was between eight and

nine o'clock in the forenoon) I suddenly felt a violent constriction of my heart; after a minute or two I began to sob. and fell from my seat in a fainting fit. This caused a great Upadyschevski was instantly summoned; commotion: luckily he was at home, and ordered me to be carried to the dormitory, where I came to myself in about a quarter-of-anhour, and then returned to my lessons. In the evening another attack occurred, which lasted considerably longer. Good old Vasili Petrovitsch was more concerned than ever, and my faithful Yevseyitsch was dreadfully frightened. This time Dr. Benis prescribed certain drops (probably drops for the nerves) which I was to take as soon as any sign of the pressure came on: on fast days I was to have some meat sent from the sanatorium for my dinner, and a wheaten roll instead of the usual black bread. On no account would he hear of my being placed in the sanatorium itself. Just at first the drops acted well: for although I felt the pressure at my heart and had fits of crying for three days, still I never lost consciousness. And then-whether my constitution had grown accustomed to the medicine or whether the disorder was increasing—the attacks became much more frequent and were of a far worse character.

No period of my childhood remains so clearly and distinctly defined in my memory as this first period of my sojourn at the Gymnasium. I could, if I chose (and I certainly do not propose doing so) relate the whole course of my peculiar sufferings without missing or misrepresenting a solitary detail. At that time it seemed to everyone, including myself, that there was absolutely no cause for my disordered condition of health; but I am now convinced, on the contrary, that it was the effect of sudden and overwhelming recollections of my past life, which arose in my mind's eye and straightway assumed the aspect and distinctness of the dreams which visit one at night. Frequently I was able to conjure up these visions consciously and by degrees, while I was absorbed in the inexhaustible depths of my memory; but just as frequently

¹ There were four Inspectors, two of whom were appointed as housemasters for the day, and these never left the building. The two who were off duty might go about their own business as they pleased, but all four were bound to be present at dinner and supper.

they would visit me of themselves with no volition on my part. It might so happen that I was thinking on some quite indifferent subject, or even busily engaged on my lessons. when the sound of a voice, which probably resembled that of someone whom I had known in earlier days—a ray of sunlight on window or wall, recalling some cherished memory of the past—a fly buzzing around, and blundering against the pane, just like those I had so often watched in my childhood -in an instant, without any consciousness of mine, affected me. A whole forgotten Past arose before my eyes and clutched at my tense nerves and heartstrings. In addition to all this. many quite accidental circumstances arose quite of themselves: once, as I recollect, I was repeating my lesson, when suddenly a pigeon alighted upon the window-sill and began bowing and cooing; instantly my thoughts flew to my own beloved pigeons and my life in the country; my heart was contracted in my breast and an attack followed. Another time I remember I had gone for a drink of water or kvass to a particular room called the Kvass-Room, when a certain plain wooden table caught my eye, an object which I had passed many a time without even noticing it; that day it had been newly planed down, and looked unusually clean and white; in a moment a similar table of linden wood stood before me, shining white and smooth as ever. It had formerly belonged to my grandmother, and after her death had been removed to my aunt's room, and was covered with all sorts of trifles such as take a child's fancy little packets of melon and pumpkin seeds, immensely: from which my aunt could fashion the most marvellous and bewitching little baskets and trays; little bags of carob beans or crawfish claws; and, priceless beyond all things, there was a big needle case in which both needles and fish hooks were kept, which my grandmother had frequently entrusted to me; all these delightful objects had often been contemplated by me with rapture, intense interest, and well-nigh suspended I was startled by the resemblance of the two tables: the Past arose clear and living, something pulled at my heart, and a terrible attack seized me. The sight of a cat rolled up asleep in the sunlight affected me similarly, for it reminded me of my own favourite cat at home. I think these instances will suffice to illustrate the trifling

objects or occurrence which produced such terrible effects.

My condition grew worse daily. The attacks were more frequent and lasted much longer: I lost my appetite, grew thinner and paler, and sleep only could restore and revive me. The solicitous Vasili Petrovitsch observed that early-rising was bad for me, and gave directions that I was not to be awakened before eight o'clock. I gained great benefit from the extra hours of repose. My guardian and servant, Yevseyitsch, nursed me like a father. Kamaschev twice attempted to admonish me in a very severe tone, and even threatened me with chastisement if I did not conduct myself in a manner more beseeming a boy of courage and breeding. He attributed my illness entirely to pampering and freakishness, declared that I set a bad example to the other pupils. continually gave orders that I was to be placed in the sanatorium, where I myself was equally anxious to be sent: but Dr. Benis objected to the plan. At last however the doctor was forced to consent, and thus it happened that I went into hospital.

Before quitting Kazan on the occasion of her last visit, my mother had made my servant, Yevseyitsch, swear to her on the ikon that he would let her know if ever I fell ill. The good fellow had been much exercised in his mind as to the fulfilment of this promise for a long time past. He had confided in Upadyschevski, but the latter had urged him to keep silence. At last, however, Yevsevitsch decided on his own plan of action without consulting anyone. One of his fellowservants, who knew how to write, penned a letter for him, in which, regardless of all prudence and without any actual foundation for the statement, he said that the young master was suffering from epilepsy and had been sent to the hospital. It may easily be imagined what a thunderbolt this letter was for my father and mother. The letter had taken a considerable time to reach Aksakovo, having been delayed owing to the frightful state of the roads in the neighbourhood, of which those dwelling in the district of Moscow can have no possible conception. The road collapsed at every step, every hole and inequality was filled with a squashy mixture of melting snow and water, and travelling was well-nigh an impossibility. But nothing could daunt or discourage my mother; she set

out that self-same day for Kazan, with her confidente Parascha and her young servant Feodor. By day and by night she travelled with shifts of unshod 1 country-horses, in peasants' sleighs, drawn by a single animal. Her poor little caravan consisted of four sledges; in the first three of these one person was seated, without luggage of any description, in the fourth sledge was packed the luggage. This was the only possible way of proceeding—a step at a time, and that only owing to the prevalence of the night frosts which, luckily, lasted until the middle of April. After ten days of wearisome travelling, my mother reached the big village of Mursicha, on the banks of the River Kama. Here the great high-road passed, which was better paved and over which she would be able to travel more rapidly; but first it was necessary to cross the Kama from Mursicha to the village of Schuran which, if I recollect aright, is some eighty versts distant from Kazan Kama was not yet thawed, but the ice was all heaving and billowing and of a blue tinge; post-chaises had, indeed, crossed branches of it only the day before, but there had been rain during the night, and no one would undertake the risk of conveying my mother and her two companions across to the farther shore. My mother saw she would be forced to spend the night at Mursicha; and in her agony at the thought of even a moment's delay, she hurried from house to house all through the village and entreated the good folks for their assistance, telling them all her troubles and offering everything she possessed by way of payment. There were brave and good-hearted men amongst these people, who could feel for a suffering mother, and who promised her that if the rain should cease during the night, and it should freeze ever so little in the early morning, they would take her safe and sound across the river and accept whatever she chose to give them for their services. Until break of day my mother knelt in prayer before the sacred picture suspended in a corner of the peasant's hut, where she spent the night. The fervent cry of the mother was heard in Heaven: a wind sprang up and dispersed the clouds, and towards morning the intense cold dried the road and covered the sloughs and puddles with a

¹ Shod horses are not used for travelling through the deep snow of the country roads at this season of the year.

thin film of ice. At dawn six capable men-each of whom plied his calling as a fisherman on the river, on the shores of which he had been born and bred, so that the waters were known to him in every season-came to fetch her. Each carried a pole or a boat-hook, and had a light pack fastened on his shoulders. They crossed themselves before the Cross on the church, held the two women, who were wearing men's boots, firmly under the arms, provided the servant, Feodor, with a pole, and commissioned him to drag the Tschuman. This last is a broad piece of bark which curves upwards in front and is drawn along by a rope; the tschuman was taken in case of the lady growing fatigued. They then set out on their march, the more active of the party walking in advance to test the ice. The path lav in an oblique line across the river and was three versts in length. The passage across this mighty stream at this time of the year is so awful that only those who are accustomed to face such dangers dare undertake it without loss of courage or presence of mind. Feodor and Parascha simply began to howl, bade a most unwilling adieu to this world and everything connected with it, and, at some points, had to be forced to continue the journey. My mother, on the contrary, grew bolder, and even gay, with every fresh step she took. Her escort stared, and then nodded encouragingly to her. Large gaping holes in the ice had to be skirted; fissures were crossed with the aid of poles; my mother refused all offers of a seat in the tschuman: and it was only when the farther shore of the river was nearly reached, when the stream was shallow under the ice, and all danger was past, that any feeling of weariness came upon her. A fur rug was immediately spread on the tschuman, and my mother lay down as on a bed and instantly fell fast asleep. In that condition she was carried to the post-station at Schuran. Arrived there, she wished to reward her escort with a hundred roubles or the half of her money; but these noble people refused such high pay and would only accept five roubles apiece. They seemed astonished at, and overwhelmed by, the warmth of my mother's thanks and blessings: by way of farewell, said to her: "God grant you a happy end to your journey!" With that they departed without any more delay on their way back, as there was no time to

be lost. The very next day the river burst through the ice. All this was told me later by Parascha. My mother travelled from Schuran to Kazan in two days, alighted at an inn, and arrived at the Gymnasium half-an-hour later.

I must now turn back in my story. I was very well treated in the sanatorium; a special little room was prepared for me which was set aside for bad cases of illness, but which at the time was vacant; and my servant Yevseyitsch was permitted to sleep in my room, he having been specially appointed as nurse for the purpose. The physician, or the second physician (I really cannot recollect his exact position). Andrei Ivanovitsch Ritter, occupied quarters just beside my room. He was a heavily-built, healthy-looking, handsome, and jolly young fellow. As a rule he was only in hospital during the forenoon, when waiting for Dr. Benis. Later in the day he set out on his private practice among the merchants' families. He was a scamp, and very frequently used to arrive home late and very drunk. I am astonished at the Chief Inspector tolerating such a man, but the former was more engaged with the sound pupils than with the ailing ones, besides which Upadyschevski had practical control of the sanatorium. I have totally forgotten the Christian and family names of the good old man who was the sanatorium Inspector at that time, although I have by no means forgotten his kind and considerate treatment. Upadyschevski was specially anxious that I should not find time lie heavy on my hands, and to avoid this he provided me with the Children's Academy in several volumes, the Discovery of America, and the Conquest of Mexico. How I revelled in the quiet, the repose, and the books! My dressing-gown instead of a uniform; liberty to spend my time as I pleased; the absence of school bells and lessons—these matters were better for me than all the medicine in the world, or the richest food either. Columbus and Pizarro roused my interest, and the unhappy Montezuma had my deepest sympathy. At the end of a few days I had read the Discovery of America and the Conquest of Mexico; and I began the Children's Academy. While reading this publication a circumstance occurred which struck me as being very remarkable, and which was only clearly explained at a much later date. I

forget in which volume I found it, but I began reading Beauty and the Beast, and from the very first word to the last, I knew every bit of the story. Suddenly I recollected that this was a legend which our old housekeeper, Pelagia, had told me dozens of times at home, only she called it The Red Floweret. Our housekeeper, Pelagia, was a remarkable woman in her way: in her earliest youth she and her father had run away from their original masters, the Alakaiev family, and had taken refuge at Astrachan, where she had lived for more than twenty years. Her father dying shortly after their escape she married, became a widow, then went into service in various merchants' families, Persians among others: grew homesick, and wandered hither and thither, seeking some family who would adopt her. A year before the death of my grandfather—a severe, but just and generous man-she appeared, as a deserter in Aksakovo. In consequence of her voluntary return to service, my grandfather received her with the utmost kindness: and as she was a most accomplished housewife, and did everything most excellently well, he was much pleased with her and made her the housekeeper. She had already filled a similar post in Astrachan. In addition to her skill in all matters pertaining to the household, Pelagia possessed a unique gift for story-telling, and knew legends and fairy-tales without end. Evidently the Orientals in Astrachan had infected the Russians there with a special passion for relating, and listening to, fairy-tales. Pelagia's richly-stocked repertory, in addition to every single Russian folk-tale, included a great mass of Oriental stories, and not a few of the Thousand-and-One-Nights. grandfather took great pleasure in this treasure-hoard of folk-lore; and as he was uneasy and ailing, and could not sleep well, Pelagia, who was farther endowed with the enviable gift of being able to remain wide-awake all night, became a real consolation and comfort for the poor old man. To her I had listened on the long winter evenings, when she would relate countless fairy-tales. The picture of the wholesome, rosy-cheeked, stout teller of stories, seated beside her spinning wheel, distaff in hand, is imprinted so clearly on my memory, that were I an artist I could portray her this very instant, exactly as she looked and lived. This tale of Beauty and the

Beast or The Red Floweret was fated to again astonish me, as time went on. Many years afterwards, in the Kazan Theatre, I heard and saw the opera of Zemira and Azor. It was my original old friend The Red Floweret in every particular, down to the least detail.

Meanwhile, in spite of interesting books, in spite of my pleasant and undisturbed conversation with Yevsevitsch about our life in the country, about our fishing, hawks, and pigeons; in spite of the absence of the odious racket of school life, and the jeers and persecution of my comrades; in spite even of the vast quantities of pills, powders, and draughts which I was compelled to swallow-my disease, which probably had been held at bay by medical science and the rest and quiet of the sanatorium routine, was by no means cured; and the attacks occurred several times each day. I was not specially troubled or upset by them, and in comparison with my former condition I was quite comfortable. torium was situated on the third floor, its windows overlooking the courtyard. The building of the Gymnasium (the present University) stood upon a hill; the view from it was superb the whole lower half of the city, with the suburb of Sukonnaya and the Tartar quarter, the River Bulak, the vast Lake Kaban, whose waters mingle with the Volga's overflowing waves when the ice melts in the Spring-this wide and picturesque panorama was spread before my eyes. How well I recollect the twilight descending upon the scene; and how the rosy dawn and the rising sun would gradually bathe it in light. The quiet consoling memory of my stay in the sanatorium will remain in my heart for ever. Not a single one of my companions ever visited me. Once indeed, the Knäschevitsch boys came to see me, but I had never become intimate with them, as I saw very little of them. They were in the intermediate class and studied in the "French Room," under Inspector Meissner. Besides just at that time I was so entirely taken up with myself, or, properly speaking, with my past life, that I had not the least regard for them, nor did I show My friendship with the Knäschevitsches only dates from my second stay at the Gymnasium, and especially from my University days.

I wrote home by every post, and assured them that I was

quite well. Suddenly Monday passed without a letter arriving from my mother. I was very much grieved at this and grew quite melancholy. The following Monday arrived, and still no letter. Now I began to feel homesick again. In vain my servant argued that the roads were in a dreadful condition just then; and probably it had not been possible for anyone to travel from Aksakovo to Buguruslan—our District town, which was five-and-twenty versts distant. I would listen to none of his arguments. I recollected very well that someone or other went every week to the post all the year round, in spite of wind or weather. I am sure I cannot tell what would have happened to me, if no letter had arrived on the third Monday: but in the middle of the second week, namely on Wednesday, the Fourteenth of April, during the forenoon my worthy Yevsevitsch, by way of preparing me for what was coming, remarked: "Perhaps the reason no letter has come is because your lady-mother is coming to see you herself. She may already be here." And then, with a face beaming with joy. he told me that Maria Nikolaievna was there, actually in the Gymnasium—but she was not to see me until Dr. Benis had given his permission: and the doctor would soon arrive. In spite of the precautions taken, I collapsed. When I recovered consciousness, my first words were: "Where is Mamma?" But there stood Dr. Benis, scolding poor Yevseyitsch who was not in the least to blame: for if he had not had the happy thought of preparing me for my mother's visit, the unexpected joy would have produced a very serious nervous attack, and these attacks were always followed by very long fainting-fits. The doctor was satisfied that a meeting between mother and son was quite permissible, especially as the latter was aware of his mother's arrival: but he dare not consent to it without the permission of the Chief Inspector or the Director, and had sent notes to each. The Director's permission was received first; and when my mother was actually with me, in my room, a message arrived from Kamaschev instructing her to wait until he had seen her. I cannot describe my sensations when my mother entered the room. Words fail me! She had grown so thin that I could scarcely recognise her; but her joy at finding her child not only still alive, but in so much better health than she had ever

expected (for what will not an anxious mother's terrified imagination portray) beamed so brightly from her still sparkling and beautiful eyes that she verily seemed to grow better and stronger each moment. I forgot everything around me: I threw my arms round my mother, and never loosed her from my childish embrace. A couple of minutes later Kamaschev made his appearance. Speaking very coldly and with the greatest politeness, he told my mother that she had transgressed the existing rules of the school; no parent or other relative was ever permitted to enter the private part of the institution; a special room was set apart for interviews with the pupils. Admission to the hospital was strictly forbidden, and was especially improper in the case of a young and beautiful lady. The blood rushed to my mother's head and, giving vent to her passionate disposition, she replied very angrily to Kamaschev, telling him, among many other things. that this surely was the only Gymnasium where such a barbarous rule existed; a mother had the best of rights to beadmitted to any place where her sick child was lying; she was there by the express permission of the Director, who was the superior of Monsieur the Chief Inspector; and that there remained nothing for the latter to do but obey the orders of his chief. Here my mother touched a very sore spot. Kamaschev turned perfectly white. He replied that this was the first time that the Director had ever permitted such a thing; his orders would certainly be obeyed, but the permission would probably not be given a second time, and he respectfully requested her to leave. But Kamaschev did not know my mother, and what could he know of a mother's heart? My mother replied she would never leave the room until the Director sent her written orders to go, or came personally to turn her out; until that happened, Monsieur Kamaschev would have to employ violence to separate her from her son. All this was said in such a tone and with such energy that there was no doubt as to her determination to carry out her intentions. She took a chair, pushed it up to the bed, and seated herself on it, turning her back on the Chief Inspector. I don't know what the latter might have done, if Dr. Benis and Upadyschevski had not entreated him to accompany them into another room. There, as Vasili Petrovitsch told me-

later, the doctor spoke very firmly and seriously to the Chief Inspector, telling him that in the event of any violent measures being taken, he, the doctor, would not be answerable for the consequences; that not only was the boy's life at stake, but he had grave fears for the mother. On his side Upadyschevski implored him to excuse the poor woman, who was nearly beside herself with grief and despair, and above all to have consideration for the sick boy. He promised to talk to my mother and persuade her to come away in a short time. Kamaschev consented with a very bad grace and went straight to the Director, accompanied by Dr. Benis, to make a full report of all that had taken place. Upadyschevski returned to my mother, whom he did his best to calm, and gave her his permission to remain with me for two hours. My mother sat with me until dusk, until about six o'clock in the evening. The scene with Kamaschev had terrified me at first: and I had begun to feel the usual constriction of the heart, but now he had gone, and the presence of my mother, her caresses, her voice, and her joy prevented the attack developing. When parting from me, my mother promised me solemnly that she would take me entirely away from the Gymnasium, and that I should return home with her. I put all my trust in her. I had always been accustomed to think that Mamma could do anything she wished; and a happy future shone in my expectant vision, painted in all the rainbow hues of the enchanted Past.

On quitting the Gymnasium, my mother went direct to Dr. Benis's house, but he was not at home. She was received by Madame Benis, at whose feet she (figuratively) threw herself, entreating that lady to use her influence with her husband to have me removed from the Gymnasium. Madame Benis could comprehend the feelings of a mother, and sympathised most deeply with my mother in her anguish, assuring the latter that her husband, Christian Karlovitsch, would do everything that lay in his power to procure my release, as she herself could promise. The doctor himself returned in a short time, and the two ladies, each in her own fashion, bombarded him with entreaties; however, he needed no persuasion, for he told them that he quite agreed with their proposal; and added that he had only just expressed a very decided opinion on the

subject to the Director himself. Most unfortunately, as it happened, the Chief Inspector had been present at the interview, and had opposed him (the doctor) tooth and nail; and the Director—who was a far from ill-natured, but very weak. man-appeared as if he were more inclined to follow the Inspector's lead. If so, there was little hope of the plan succeeding. On this my mother burst out with a recital of all the unworthy chicanery—with its inevitable and unhappy consequences—perpetrated by the Chief Inspector against me. Dr. Benis detested the man himself because he was continually usurping his own authority, but far from soothing my mother's irritation, he only succeeded in increasing it to such a pitch that henceforth she hated Kamaschev as her own, and her son's, worst enemy. The doctor and his wife treated my mother with great kindness and hospitality; they begged her to lie down on the sofa and have something to eat, as she had not even drunk a cup of tea during the last four-and-twenty The doctor prepared a draught for her and, what was more to the point, assured her that my disorder was purely nervous, and that once restored to my old life in the country, my health would be quite re-established. Open war against the Chief Inspector was decided upon by all present. It was decided that my mother should call upon the Director the next morning, before Kamaschev had time to get to him with the previous day's report. She was first to ask his permission to visit me twice daily at the sanatorium; and then to try to extort a promise from him (should the doctor consider this latter step necessary) that I should be permitted to return home to be nursed back to health by my parents. Dr. Benis warned her most earnestly not to say anything wrong about Kamaschev nor to complain about him; above all, not to breathe a word about his antipathy towards her sick child, nor to make any allusion to the way in which he had persecuted the latter. After my mother had thanked the kind doctor and his wife from the very depths of her grateful heart and had prayed that God would bestow every blessing upon them, she returned to her own quarters at the inn for a rest. And rest was imperatively necessary for her: twelve-days' journey across such appalling roads, almost without sleep or food, and a whole day of such painful and

agonising agitation, were enough to unnerve a strong man. and my mother was a suffering woman. But God lends His own strength and courage to the weak, and after a few hours' sleep my mother awoke refreshed and revived. At nine o'clock the following morning she was already in the Director's reception room. The Director came to her immediately and received her in a manner expressive of the most open prejudice, which, however, very soon altered. The sincerity of her grief and the touching persuasiveness of her tears found the way to his heart. He made few, if any, objections to her visiting me at the hospital twice a day, and remaining there until eight o'clock at night; but her request that I should be permitted to leave the Gymnasium was firmly refused. Perhaps even in this case the tears and prayers of my mother would have won the day, but suddenly in marched the Chief Inspector, and the scene was changed. The Director promptly raised his voice and declared in a most severe tone that it was an utterly unheard-of thing for a State Alumnus to be sent home on account of illness or home-sickness; in the first case such a step would cast discredit on the medical and nursing staff of the institution, while in the latter case such a proceeding was utterly absurd. Home-sickness was bound to afflict any boy coming to school, who had hitherto only been accustomed to childish amusements, especially a spoilt and pampered boy. Kamaschev most cordially agreed with all the Director said, and supported his view with many very sage and even sarcastic remarks. He pointed out the dire results of female influence on a boy's education—the mother coddling and pampering her son, while the latter set an evil example to others by his impertinence, disobedience, audacity, and ingratitude. He concluded by remarking that the Government did not provide funds for the salaries of officials and tutors and the board and education of State Alumni, in order that the latter should leave before the whole educational course was completed, whenever they felt inclined to shirk their duties. In my case, he added, the Direction had especial reasons for wishing to keep me, as my exceptional abilities and the good progress I had already made in my studies distinguished me as a boy who would make a most excellent tutor. My mother was greatly incensed at this piece of

Jesuitical sophistry. Dr. Benis's warning was thrown to the winds, and very heatedly and imprudently she expressed her extreme astonishment that Monsieur Kamaschev should speak so highly of her son, as, ever since the poor boy's entrance into the school, the Chief Inspector had continually persecuted him in the most persistent and uncalled-for way-rebuking him without cause, jeering at him, and branding him with all sorts of offensive nicknames such as: "Cry-baby," "Milksop," and the like, being all the time perfectly aware that the pupils would repeat his witticisms. This unjust tyranny and persecution of Monsieur the Chief Inspector was the sole cause of her boy's quite normal home-sickness developing into a disease which threatened to bring terrible consequences in its train. She considered the Chief Inspector had treated her with the utmost hostility, assuming powers to himself which were not his, in trying to turn her out of the hospital in defiance of the Director's permitting her admission there: and Monsieur Kamaschev would perhaps kindly observe that he was not the judge in this matter. The Director was considerably embarrassed, but the infuriated Chief Inspector told her sternly that the whole affair had been ruined by her own want of self-control. During his absence she had taken advantage of the weakness of one of the officials, and had continually taken her son away from school, continually been in and out of the Gymnasium; she had turned back on her journey to come and upset him; and now, at the end of two months, had turned up again. How was it possible for the boy to grow reconciled to his new existence? The cause of his illness was herself, not his superior's severity; and her presence there was only developing fresh trouble for her son. who had been on the high road to a full recovery, was certain to be in a serious state in a day or so. On hearing him say this, my mother screamed and then fainted away. good-natured Director was terrified, and quite at a loss what to do. The swoon lasted almost an hour, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that my mother was brought round. Her first words, on recovering consciousness, were: "Let me go to my son!" The Director, who had had a great shock himself and was full of pity and compassion, was overjoyed on finding that my mother was not really dead (as he

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had at first feared), and gave instructions to the Chief Inspector that she was to be permitted to visit the hospital whenever she chose whereupon she instantly proceeded there. The doctor received her and reassured her to the best of his ability, telling her that my new illness-a fever-was in no way dangerous, it was merely the result of shock to the nervous system and was actually beneficial to anyone in my condition. As a matter of fact the first feverish symptoms were very slight, and although they became more pronounced at the end of a few days and the disease took an acute form for a couple of weeks, the hysterical attacks ceased entirely. My mother spent almost the whole day with me. The Director visited the hospital several times and was exceedingly kind and friendly each time that he saw me and my mother. He was evidently touched by my emaciated and pale countenance: and my mother's expressive features, which only too clearly betraved her anxiety and distress of mind, excited his deep sympathy. Next day, when Kamaschev was about to enter my room, my mother refused him admission and even banged the door in his face. She begged the Director to forbid the Chief Inspector to come near me, alleging as her reason for this request that she could not see the man without losing her composure, and was afraid that I should be much terrified, if she were taken with a similar fainting fit to that which the Chief Inspector himself had caused her in the Director's own house. The good man had a very vivid recollection of the embarrassing event, and gave a wholehearted assent to her request. The Chief Inspector felt himself greatly insulted, but kept out of the way.

The execution of Dr Benis's original plan to remove me entirely from the Gymnasium—which plan had remained in statu quo during my second illness—was now to be carried out, and the necessary steps were therefore taken. Wishing to gain counsel from her friends on this occasion, my mother consulted Maxim Dimitriyevitsch Knäschevitsch on the matter; but the energetic and vehement, though goodnatured, Serb quite disapproved of the project. "No, no, my dear Madame Maria Nikolaievna," said he, "I cannot consent to your carrying off your boy, wrapping him up in cotton wool, feeding him on sugar plums, and bringing him

up among a lot of young peasants at home, where he will grow into a country bumpkin and be good-for-nothing. What sort of a man is he likely to make? I tell you plainly, that if I were in Timofei Stepanovitsch's place. I would permit nothing of the sort." This reply offended my mother, and she remarked that she had no intention of permitting her son to grow up into a bumpkin or country clown: but above all things she must save his life and restore his health . . . after this she never went near the Knäschevitsches again. At that time a distant relative of my father was living in Kazan. one Counsellor Micheiev. My mother betook herself to him and, although he entirely disapproved of her plan and declined to assist her in carrying it out, in the end he was forced to defer to her wishes and wrote a petition to the Gymnasium Committee, begging for my discharge. In this petition he stated that my mother requested permission to remove her son for a time, until his health should be entirely restored: when this was effected she pledged herself to present him again as a State Alumnus. Dr. Benis's report was submitted to the Committee together with this petition. In this, the doctor stated that he considered it absolutely necessary that the pupil. Aksakov, should be sent for a time into the country, to his parents' house, his illness being of such a character that only country air and home-life in the bosom of his own family. could effect a cure. All medicinal means had failed to restore him, and the nervous attacks to which he was subject threatened to develop into epilepsy, which might end in apoplexy or lasting injury to his mental powers. I cannot say how much of this was true; but the doctor evidently did not consider he had said enough; and, as I had a slight thickening of the knee joint and a curve in the bones of my legs, constant active exercise in the fresh air was likewise necessary, as well as the frequent use of some sort of decoction (I have not the faintest recollection what it was); and he concluded by recommending that the State Apothecary should be consulted. The last part of his report was a pure invention, Certainly I had very swollen knees, but that is quite common with children of my age and disappears of Notwithstanding, these trifling external symptoms proved of the greatest value in the long run. And now the

conference was held under the presidence of the Director, supported by the Chief Inspector and the three head-masters. Kamaschev who, up to this time, had been always accustomed to have things his own way, exerted all his influence, and the tutors sided with him. The Director was uncertain how to act. Dr. Benis was instructed to invite the Inspector of the College of Medicine to a consultation, and to try the effect of fresh medical remedies; but the doctor declared that he could not carry out these instructions, and warned the conference that if I were not speedily discharged, the disappearance of the fever would cause the return of the earlier symptoms of the disorder: which was, indeed, perfectly true. When my poor mother realised that matters were not progressing smoothly, she fell into a state of utter despair. Finally Dr. Benis advised her to ask the Director if he would arrange that the Gymnasium physician and certain other quite disinterested medical men, should make an examination of me in his presence, and then give their opinion of the case. My mother set off to the Director once more to place this suggestion before him, but, desiring to be excused from listening to her everlasting tears and entreaties, the worthy man sent word that he regretted he was unable to see her and begged her to call again another day; and as this was not the first time that she had been put off in this way, my mother had taken the precaution of bringing a letter with her, in which she stated that this was her very last visit: if he still refused to see her, she would not stir out of his waiting room until she was driven out: and surely he would not be so cruel as to treat an unhappy mother in that way. There was nothing more to be done. The Director walked meekly into his reception-room and could not long withstand her expression of deep affliction and despair. He promised, on his word of honour, to do exactly as she wished; he kept his word, too. The very next day the Gymnasium conference passed a resolution, which quite coincided with Dr. Benis's wishes, and the appeal made by my mother only on the preceding day. (a fact quite unknown to anyone present—the Director alone excepted). All the gentlemen considered the calling-in of outside opinion was a fine snub and mortification for Dr. Benis, and were convinced that the other doctors would

express quite a contrary opinion to that of Benis. The medical officer for the city and two of the Fellows of the College of Medicine were thereupon invited to a consultation. However Dr. Benis, who was quite assured beforehand of their acquiescence in his opinion, awaited developments with the utmost calm. His confidence had the effect of greatly reassuring my mother who, for her part, tried to reassure me. She gave me a full and detailed account of every step she had undertaken, and all the conversations and interviews she had held with this or that person; and assured me, again and again, that in spite of all obstacles she had not given up hope of bringing the affair to a successful end. But I had long since resigned all hope of ever escaping from my stone dungeon, as I called the Gymnasium; and the return home to the country had grown into an unattainable dream of happiness. The correspondence with the Direction as to the delegation of physicians lasted a considerable time: and as my fever had entirely disappeared, the Director was forced to accede to the Chief Inspector's urgent request that I should be discharged from hospital. Dr. Benis had to consent to this. I returned to the Nobles' Room to Upadyschevski, and found my bed had not been given to anyone during my absence. After my somewhat long sojourn in the freedom of my quiet and peaceful sick room, the whole of the day's routine and the noise and bustle of my life among my schoolfellows were more intolerable than ever. I considered that my transfer from hospital was an evil omen, and began to think that I should never be released. My mother came to see me every day, but only stayed a short time; and we only met in the general reception room. All these vexations began to weigh heavily on my spirits, and my old seizures came on again as violently as ever, indeed just as if there had never been the slightest intermission. God be praised, this painful state of affairs lasted only a short time. Exactly a week later, when the pupils had finished supper and were in the dormitories preparing for bed, Yevseyitsch slipped a note from my mother into my hand, and whispered: "Don't let anyone see you reading it!" My mother wrote, telling me that I was not to get out of bed the next morning, and was to tell Vasili Petrovitsch that my legs, and especially my knees, ached very

badly: and to beg him to send me back to the sanatorium-I was to burn the note, which I instantly did. Lying, up to this moment, had been an unknown sin. My mother had always threatened me with heavy chastisement should I ever lie, and I was very much astonished at her instructions, although a dim conjecture arose in my mind that this lie was going to help me to make my escape from the Gymnasium. It was long before I fell asleep, haunted as I was by the painful thought of having to tell a falsehood in the morning, which no doubt would be instantly detected by Vasili Petrovitsch and the doctor. The next day, when my guardian, Yevseyitsch, awoke me, I told him that my legs hurt me very much and I wished to go back to hospital. A smile lurked round his mouth, and off he went to inform Upadyschevski, who to my astonishment, made no fuss, but remarked quite calmly: " All right, let him stay in bed: I will just take the other children upstairs, and then come back and take him to the sanatorium." However my schoolfellows would not leave me in peace, and several of them tore the bedclothes from my head which I had purposely covered up, and shouted: "Why aren't you getting up?" Full of confusion and blushing hotly, I was obliged to repeat the lie. They only laughed and retorted: "Liar! You are only too lazy to do your lessons; you like being in the hospital!" At last the noisy throng of boys formed themselves into a procession and marched upstairs. Upadyschevski returned, and without asking any questions about my illness, he took me to the sanatorium and handed me over personally to the second physician. Dr. Ritter, and the hospital Inspector. I was placed in a different room to that I had formerly occupied. At nine o'clock Dr. Benis arrived, made an examination, and anticipated any reply of mine by remarking: "And so your legs hurt you very much? I expected as much!" and then exhibiting my knees to the other doctor and the Inspector, he added: "Just see how they have swollen in the course of a single week, and how the heat has increased in them!" The condition of my knees was exactly what it had always been, I felt no heat in them, but I perceived, to my great astonishment, that everyone seemed determined to tell lies about them. But what astonished me the most was my mother, who arrived

soon after Dr. Benis, and talked quite calmly with him and the others about my new and non-existent complaint. When we were alone, I looked at her wonderingly, and asked: "What does this mean, Mamma?" She threw her arms round me, and replied: "What else could we do, dear child? There is no other way, and Dr. Benis has ordered us to do it. Very soon some new doctors will be coming to see you, and you must tell them that your legs pain you. Christian Karlovitsch says that unless you do this, you will never get away from the Gymnasium." A ray of hope illuminated my heart, although I saw no especial cause for placing any trust in it. Two days later, my mother told me at night that the examination was to take place the next day, once more repeated everything to me that I was to say about the pain in my legs, and satisfied herself that I was able to reply promptly and without any hesitation. And the following day, at eleven o'clock, the Director, the Chief Inspector, Dr. Benis, and two strange doctors, the three tutors who had taken part in the conference, and Upadyschevski, all marched into my room. The little chamber was quite full of men. Chairs were brought for all. and the whole party seated themselves solemnly round my bed. I was so abashed that I instantly began to feel very ill. but I managed to compose myself without any assistance, and then listened while Dr. Benis explained the history of my disorder to the other doctors, partly in Latin, but for the most part in Russian: on several occasions he appealed to Upadyschevski. My servant, Yevseyitsch, was summoned, and was questioned closely as to the condition of my health prior to my entrance into the Gymnasium. A great many questions were put to me; the doctors hovered round me, testing my lungs and stomach, counting my pulse, looking at my tongue; when it came to the turn of my knees and the bones of my legs, they all crowded round me and began to tap and poke at the imaginary painful spot with their fingers, all talking and arguing at the same time with the greatest zest and energy. I recollect that the expressions "Lymph, chyle, and scurvy" occurred with great frequency. At last this wearisome examination, which had lasted at least an hour, and had fatigued me greatly, came to an end. When I was left to myself, I fell asleep at once and, on waking, found my mother

sitting beside me, while on the table stood my dinner of invalid's fare, already cold. My mother was still hopeful. though, as vet, no decision had been made. Very soon she left the room to go and see Dr. Benis, and about two hours later she returned with a face beaming with joy. It appeared that on leaving me, the physicians had gone direct to the Gymnasium Conference, where they had drawn up and signed a joint protocol relating to their recent scrutiny, in which they stated that they were in the fullest accord with Dr. Benis's view of the case, and urgently recommended that the State Alumnus, Aksakov, should be confided to the care of his parents in the country; they noted the lotion which had already been prescribed for the relief of the patient; recommended certain medicaments to be employed at the same time: and advised frequent cold baths later. The Director gave his unqualified assent to their decision; the three tutors followed his lead: but the Chief Inspector stuck to his own opinion and refused to sign the document.1 His attitude. however, was not taken into account when the question was finally settled.

Thus at last the longed-for release came, which for so many weeks had seemed an unattainable dream! My mother was wild with joy; she cried, laughed, embraced everyone especially old Upadyschevski and Yevseyitsch-and gave thanks to Heaven. I was so happy that for a time I positively could not believe in my good fortune, imagining it to be only a charming dream and dreading the awakening. Even while my mother embraced me I kept repeating: "Is it really true?" That evening she sat beside me later than ever before, and old Upadyschevski came several times and begged her to go. Kamaschev never changed his attitude: during the sitting of the conference he suggested that my mother should be requested to refund the entire amount which my board and education had cost the Gymnasium Committee during my five months' residence at the institution. But the Director would not hear of this proposal, objecting that the pupil had not been entirely discharged, only restored to his parents' care until his recovery. Three days later, my mother was

¹ A copy of this protocol was preserved in our family for many years after the event.

asked to attend the conference, and requested to put her signature to a document in which she undertook to restore her son to the Gymnasium on his recovery. This done, she was at liberty to take me away with her. From this conference my mother came direct to the hospital for the very last time. Yevseyitsch assisted me to dress myself in my own clothes. and packed and delivered up all the State books and other belongings. We bade adieu to Upadyschevski and the Inspector of the sanatorium, while shedding tears of the warmest gratitude. My mother took my hand and, accompanied by Yevseyitsch, we quitted the building. I uttered a cry of joyful surprise; there before the great door stood our own family coach, to which were harnessed four horses of our own breeding; on the box sat the familiar figure of our coachman. while the postillion's saddle was occupied by the still more familiar figure of the man who had so often provided me with worms for angling. Feodor and Yevsevitsch assisted me to clamber into the old-fashioned calash: I seated myself beside my mother, and off we set homewards. My father had sent the carriage and horses, with the servants, from our estate. In spite of the bliss which overwhelmed and nearly stupefied my heart, I was so sorrowful at parting from Upadyschevski that I began to cry; and even when seated in the carriage it was a long time before I ceased weeping. And in truth the kindliness of this man, his unselfish, tender, self-sacrificing sympathy for everyone—even for entire strangers—merited my warmest praise and gratitude: it must be recollected that, as he had already served a long term of years at the Gymnasium, he must necessarily have come in contact with more or less similar cases to my own. Hearts which custom cannot blunt are rare indeed! At the lodgings I found Parascha and our landlady-the Captain's wife, Madame Aristova of yoreexpecting me and crying for joy; the hostess having always sympathised deeply with us in our woes. (My mother had gone direct to her house from the post-house). The same evening my mother and I went together to Dr. Benis's house, to thank him and bid him adieu. Here let me do full justice to this man, who passed in the city, I know not why, for a cold and egoistic character, but who shewed unfailing and most disinterested kindness towards us. He refused to accept so

much as a copeck from my mother, and even declined a personal gift which she offered him in remembrance of all she owed to his good-natured efforts on our behalf. He had paid the regulation fee of five-and-twenty roubles in my mother's name to each of the doctors who had assisted at the examination; and, hearing this, she immediately refunded the sum to him. Thus it happened that we could only reward him with words, tears, and blessings. My mother's thanks were so fervent and so heartfelt that Dr. Benis and his wife were both deeply affected. As for myself, I was strangely indifferent: and although I was perfectly aware that my release from the Gymnasium was solely owing to Dr. Benis's untiring efforts on my behalf. I never even shed a tear; and thanked him in such a feeble and perfunctory manner that my mother gave me a good scolding afterwards. The next day we went to the Cathedral in the forenoon, and afterwards paid our yows and gave thanks to Our Lady of Kazan. After this we went to visit the Director; but he was not at home, or preferred not to see us. On our return we found Vasili Petrovitsch at our lodgings, who had come to see us for the last time and say Farewell. On no account would be accept a gift as a souvenir from my mother, and replied curtly and decidedly: "Do not insult me, Maria Nikolaievna!" Ah, but I parted from him in a very different way to that in which I had parted from Dr. Benis! I wept violently and inconsolably: a return of my old attacks was feared, but a newly-prescribed variety of drops calmed my agitation. Here I must observe that this was the third occasion during the last few days that this medicine had warded off the attacks. As soon as Upadyschevski had gone, we hastily ate a little dinner, and then set about our packing. We felt nervous while we remained in Kazan. and each hour of delay seemed more like a long day; but by evening all was ready. It was a warm summer-like evening. and my mother and I wrapped ourselves up and lay down to sleep in the carriage. At dawn the horses were harnessed noiselessly, without awakening me, and we drove away from Kazan. When I awoke a bright sun was shining through the windows of the carriage; Parascha was still asleep; mother was sitting beside me, weeping tears full of joy and gratitude to God. Her happiness shone through her tears, and

her eyes were so beautiful through the intensity of her joy that no one could have felt sorrow—but only delight—at seeing her weep thus. She embraced her darling, and a torrent of tender words and caresses bespoke her bliss. It was the nineteenth of May, my dear sister's birthday. The mild and charming spring dawn of a typical May day shed its warm light over the whole beautiful landscape. Through the carriagewindow I had glimpses of the fields of young green corn. varied by meadows, pastures, and forests. I had such a yearning to let my gaze rove over the whole wide horizon that I begged them to halt and, jumping out of the carriage, I began to run about and frolic like a thoughtless five-year-old child; now for the first time. I felt that I was free. My mother remained in the carriage and watched me with joy. I threw my arms round Yevsevitsch and Feodor, and greeted the coachman and postillion, who both lost no time in telling me that when they left Aksakovo the fish were in fine condition and had begun to bite. Next I saluted the horses. Yevsevitsch took me in his arms and held me while I stroked each of them. They were a magnificent team of six, dark brown with vellow specks on muzzle and flanks, a breed long since extinct in the Government of Orenburg: but twenty years ago these horses were still remembered and praised. They were big, solidlybuilt animals of incredible strength, splendid trotters, never losing their wind, and practically untiring. They could travel from eighty to ninety versts a day, drawing a heavy Oh, God! how happy I was! They had some trouble in persuading me to get back into the carriage, but, once inside, I kept my head out of the window until we reached the station where we baited, and hailed every pleasing object that we passed with shouts of joy. At last a gleam of water sparkled in the distance—that was the Myoscha, not very wide indeed, but a deep stream and famous for its fish; to cross it you had to enter a very uncomfortable and ramshackle ferry-boat, worked by ropes. We spent a long time on the passage: the horses were conveyed across, two at a time, and the carriage was excessively difficult to manage, being so heavy. In order to lighten it somewhat, all the trunks and other articles were removed, and even with this relief the boat shipped water. My mother and I crossed first to the farther

shore, which was covered with blossoming and fragrant bushes. I could hardly contain myself for rapture. The thoughtful postillion, an ardent fisherman, had brought a complete set of fishing-tackle and a rod with him, which were stowed away under the carriage. This tackle was unpacked and, while we were crossing. I baited a hook with a bit of bread and caught a bream. Excepting the Dyoma, I believe I have never known any river so full of fish as the Myoscha; it fairly swarmed with them-no sooner was the line cast than the bait was taken. Was it a wonder then that this halting-place was a region of bliss to me, after my release from imprisonment in the Gymnasium? On the shore which we had just quitted lay a village belonging to some estate, where we had purchased oats, hav, a chicken, eggs, and all sorts of necessary victuals, What a delicious dinner was prepared for us on the trivet by Yevseyitsch, who was a bit of a cook in his way! How he fried our fish in a pan, and what a dainty dish he made of them! Already Kazan was left thirty versts behind. We rested and baited for four hours, and then resumed our journey. Black storm-clouds massed themselves in the heavens, the thunder rolled, and the rain drenched the earth, so that the road was neither hot nor dusty. We proceeded at a walk, but soon broke into such a brisk trot that we made more than ten versts an hour. But very soon the sky cleared, and the gorgeous sun soon dried the last traces of the rain. We covered some forty versts, and then halted to spend the night in a field, having provided ourselves with everything necessary for camping out at the fodder-station. Here were new pleasures, new delights! The horses were taken out of the carriage, tied in pairs, and left to pasture at will on the succulent young grass; a clear-burning fire was soon prepared, and the travelling samovar, a big tea kettle with an inner tube. set upon it; a leathern rug from out of the carriage was spread upon the ground, the provision boxes were opened, and tea prepared. And how good it tasted in the fresh evening breeze! At the end of two hours or thereabouts the horses, which were now cooled down, were watered; the nose bags filled with oats were tied in a row to the pole which was laid across a row of posts which had been driven into the ground; the bags were opened, and the horses led up to feed.

My mother, myself, and Parascha lay down to rest in the carriage, and I fell happily asleep, while listening to the horses chewing their oats and snorting when the dust rose to their nostrils. The next morning we found ourselves rather to the north of the village of Schuran, on the other side of the Kama. which latter was now navigable. I had a horror of great waters as a child-I have it yet-and that day a lively breeze was blowing. At the ferry-station a large and quite new ferry-boat was moored, which could carry all the horses and the carriage across the river in one load. I and Parascha remained in the carriage, the curtains were closely drawn. and the jalousies closed, so that I should not catch even a glimpse of the swelling waves. All the same, I tied a handkerchief round my eyes, and trembled with fear throughout the whole passage. No ill consequences followed, however. The spring landing-stage was still in Mursvcha; but in summer it was situated some versts lower down. My mother visited her former gallant escort: she brought a handsome present for each, which was accepted joyfully and gratefully, but with no expressions of wonder or admiration. We then journeved on for another fifteen versts to the next baiting-station. In this manner we continued our journey; and on the fifth day we arrived at the Tartar village of Baitugan, which is situated on the river Sok, only twenty versts from Aksakovo. Here we were to spend the night. The Sok is very rich in fish, but my mother feared the damp evening breeze and would not permit me to angle; the postillion however tried his luck, and hooked some perch and bream. On quitting our camp the next morning it would have been quite possible to alight at the village of Neklyudovo, where the Kalpinski and Lupenevski families lived, and equally easy to stop at Bachmetevka, where a new neighbour of the name of Osorgin had recently come to reside with his young wife; but it so happened that we (as well as they) were all fast asleep as we drove by. versts from Aksakovo, exactly on the border of our own land, I woke up suddenly, as if aroused by someone, just as we were between the linden grove and the forest, having reached the mountain summit. And soon our Aksakovo would be plain to the view, with the wide pond, the mill, the long rows of peasants' huts, the big house, and the birch wood!

Incessantly I asked the driver: "Can you see the village yet?" And at last—at last he bent down to the front window and said: "There's our Aksakovo, as plain as if you held it in your hand!" Then I begged my mother so earnestly to let me get out and sit on the box beside the coachman that she was compelled to give her consent. I cannot tell you what passed through my heart when I saw my beloved Aksakovo once more! There are no words to express those thoughts!

During the whole course of my life, each time that I have approached my home, Aksakovo, I have experienced similar sensations to these. But once, on returning after an absence of twelve years—it was somewhat early in the season when I drew nigh to my Aksakovo—my heart beat high with expectation and I longed to feel the joyful excitement of old. My thoughts flew back to the happy Past, and a whole cloud of memories encircled me . . . but alas, I felt no delight, only pain and trouble; I was inexpressibly cast down, and sorrowful. Like to some enchanter, who having summoned spirits to his aid finds he cannot control them as he would, nor knows not how he may dismiss them—so I remained—unable to drive away those memories, unable to still the sorrowful tumult of my soul. Old bottles cannot hold new wine, and an old heart cannot contain youthful passion.

. . . But then, oh God, how different it all was then !

Several times I felt a tightening of the breast and was on the point of sinking down, but I kept silence, holding tightly to the rail of the coach box and clutching the coachman, and the spasms passed away of themselves. Swiftly the carriage descended the slope of the mountain, crossed the dilapidated bridge over the Buguruslan, nearly sinking into the boggy ground at Krutez, and only saved by the powerful efforts of the mighty horses, swept by the reedy margin of the mill pond, past the village—and there stood our house, and on the balcony were my father and my little sister. As we drew near, she clapped her hands and cried: "Brother Sergei is sitting on the box!" Out ran my aunt and my little brother; the nurse appeared with the baby sister in her arms! What kisses and embraces, what joyful cries, what questions and answers! The whole household came scampering out, even the peasants who were working on the farm and a crowd of

young boys and girls. . . . My father was rejoiced, for he had never expected that I should be permitted to leave the Gymnasium. During the last weeks no one had had any time to write to him from Kazan, and he had been quite unaware of all that was happening. . . .

SKETCH VIII

A YEAR IN THE COUNTRY

During the first few days my mind was so full of excitement that I was nearly out of my senses. First of all, there were my pigeons to be visited, and the two hawks which had been kept through the winter. I rushed around and sought out every familiar and beloved spot: and these were not a few. All about the house, the garden, the kitchen gardens, and in the neighbouring grove where the crows built their nests, I ran, accompanied by my sister, who held my hand tightly and pointed out this and that to me like some little housewife. Amongst other things she shewed me a big, banked-up hot bed. on which grew melon and pumpkin plants. With her I visited all the rooms in the house, where many treasures were assembled; beautiful copper and iron caskets decorated with carvings in bone, and a splendid collection of minerals and petrifactions which had been presented to my mother by a high official in the Ministry of Mines. We sought out the old housekeeper, Pelagia, in her underground kingdom, and were regaled by her with thick cream and black bread. As my sister, however, was not permitted to accompany me on the river, or even to cross it, Yevseyitsch was my companion in that direction. Together we crossed the little bridge which led to the first islet, where a summer kitchen was built. and where broad pieces of bark were spread, on which cleanwashed wheat was drying. This islet was surrounded on two sides by an old bed of the Buguruslan, which had dried up and was overgrown with willow bushes; we forced our way through these by means of the poles which lay about, and immediately came upon another and rather bigger island, which likewise was bounded on one side by an ancient waterway; but this latter was deep and still filled with water

This was a favourite haunt of my Aunt Yevgenia Stepanovna: the river banks were all clothed with birches and an avenue of limes stretched across the centre of the island. evident that this spot had been very dear to my grandfather in days of vore: he had planted these trees long before the birth of his youngest daughter. Yevgenia, for the trees were about fifty years old and my aunt but five-and-thirty. the rest of her sisters, Yevgenia, Stepanovna had received no education; but she possessed a certain innate and intrinsic culture of her own, and was a great lover of Nature. Her own room was crammed with a multitude of second-rate books. old-fashioned romances (probably gifts from her brother) and plays. All these works had been perused by my aunt, sometimes with—frequently without—the permission of her parents; especially do I recollect a vaudeville rejoicing in the title of Tragical Prattle. My aunt loved to bring a book with her to read on the island, and was very fond of angling in the deep, ancient water-course. She had carved her name on several of the birch trees, together with the dates. in bygone years—and even verses culled from a collection of lyrics. Oh, how I loved this island! How fair it was on a hot day in summer! Full of cool shadows, and all around me —the water! The new course of the river lay on one side of the island, where the sluices opened and where the swiftlyflowing waters from the mill joined the main stream; on the other side was the old bed of the Buguruslan, still deep and full of water, as I have already said. Even to-day I cannot recall those summer noontides on that island without a quivering and wild beating of my heart. To-day it is changed. The old river bed is nearly dried up; another and a quite new channel, on the other side of the island, is fed by sluice pipes; willow bushes and alders have overgrown the whole spot; and soon it will cease to be an island at all, as the land as far as the banks of the mill-dam is all reclaimed from the water. After I had gazed and admired my fill on the island; examined every single tree, read and re-read all my aunt's carved inscriptions, inspected the dace and carp, rushed round the old watercourse or stood motionless dreaming beside it, I set off with Yevsevitsch in the direction of the mill, first, however, running up again to the Anthony Bridge, where I had so often fished

for gudgeon; and lingering beside the smithy, where it had always been my delight to watch the sparks fly as the hammer wrought the glowing iron. But when I came running out upon the bank of the dam and the wide pond lay stretched out before me with its green sedges and water lilies, and the long dam overhung by young alder bushes and tenanted by a whole world of fish and water fowl-and I saw the sluices, the lock, and the mill itself-I was enchanted with joy and, for several moments, stood as if rooted to the spot. miller, nicknamed "Boltunenok1," took me in charge. I was a great favourite with him and he had prepared an unexpected amusement for me; he had laid several lines for pike in the water which had overflowed and inundated the fields, and these lines he had purposely left untouched, in anticipation of my arrival, as he knew that I was certain to pay him a visit. Now he made me and Yevsevitisch get into his little boat, and rowed us across the flooded grass to the spot where the lines were set. The water was quite still, and I was not in the least nervous. I pulled up each of the lines, and at the end of one was a big pike, which I captured with Yevseyitsch's assistance, and carried it home in triumph. Two days after this, my father took me out fishing with him to a spot called the Big and Little Bushes, we went as far as the Anthony Gorge—where high aloft bubbled a great spring, surrounded by a cloud of spray and foam, which fell all around us-and to the so-called Channel, where the waters of this spring were conducted through pipes made of lime-tree trunks. We also visited the Mordvin Gorge, where a brook sprang from a fissure in the rock at the base of the mountain, and then past the lime-grove and the Secret Grove, and through the bee-garden which lay between them, where all manner of plants grew. An old bee-wife lived there, summer and winter, in a little mud hut, a very good friend of mine; she had an old tomcat, Timoschka, with his old wife, Maschka, both cats being named in compliment to my parents, Timofei and Maria.

And with these healthy and hearty amusements the first two weeks passed after my arrival at Aksakovo. It is needless

1 "Chatterbox." [Tr. H.R.]

to say how delighted my mother was at seeing me so happy and so full of life and health. While in Kazan, she had taken the necessary steps to provide against my time at home being spent in complete idleness, and had purchased copies of every book used by my class at the Gymnasium. As it was her intention to let me return to that institution whenever, with God's help, my health should be thoroughly re-established perhaps at the end of a year—she made me study, under her supervision, two or three hours daily: hearing me repeat all I had already learnt; superintending me while I wrote copies: and making me read aloud to her out of sundry books suited to my age. I had much pleasure in carrying out her wishes. and my rustic delights seemed all the sweeter after my labours. Once again I resumed my task of teaching that dear little scholar, my sister, and this time with the most successful results.

I have already remarked that just at first I appeared to be in perfect health: but this was very far from being the case. To be sure. I had no return of the old attacks after leaving the Gymnasium; the constriction and palpitation of the heart seemed to have disappeared while I was on my way homewards, and had never occurred after I reached the country; but I began to wander and rave every night in my sleep, more frequently and more violently as time went on. Just at first my mother attached little or no importance to these ravings, and attributed them merely to the excessive exercise I had taken during the day and the lively and excited fancy of an imaginative child; and all the more as I-like many another child—had been a great dreamer before entering the Gymnasium. But gradually these dreams assumed a different form. First: I never passed a single night without wanderings on several occasions indeed these assumed quite a violent Secondly: I not only talked in my sleep, but sprang out of bed, weeping and sobbing, and rushed into other rooms. I slept in my parents' room and my bed was placed beside theirs; they now took the precaution of locking the door inside, while our old housekeeper, Pelagia, slept in the passage outside, so as to effectually prevent me from walking in my sleep. But these nightly visitations, which grew worse from day to day, or rather, from night to night, ended by

assuming the actual features of the old day-time attacks at the Gymnasium. I began to weep and sob in the same old way. then became unconscious, and finally sank into a deep and natural slumber. And these new nocturnal attacks became more violent and terrifying than the daylight ones, and took a great many different forms. Sometimes I wept and sobbed softly, pressing my hands to my bosom, while I whispered incoherently: this state would continue for hours, and pass away with delirious ravings and convulsions. When I was awakened—a proceeding which was avoided later—wearied out with weeping and crying. I would sink into a calm sleep. It was difficult, well-nigh impossible, for those who watched me to refrain from awaking me and trying to soothe me, as the sight of my distress was so harrowing. I was afterwards told that not only my mother—who was utterly unnerved on these occasions—but my father, my aunt, and all present, used to weep when they witnessed my agonised sobs and tears. Many a time I would spring to my feet with a piercing cry. stare wildly in their faces, and stammer incoherently: "Let ... me ... go ... I must ... I cannot where is he?.... where must I go?" and similar disconnected meaningless words. I would dash to the door, the window, or into a corner of the room, and try to escape somehow: beating and kicking the wall with my hands and feet. At these times I possessed such strength that two and even three people could not control me as I, drenched with sweat. dragged them about the room. Such an attack as this invariably ended in a long fit of unconsciousness, during which it was difficult to detect my breathing: the insensibility gradually turned to sleep, at first somewhat uneasy and disturbed, but finally becoming profoundly calm, which frequently lasted until nine o'clock in the morning. After a few slight sobs and tears I should awake, quite brisk and lively, just as if I had slept peacefully through the whole night; but a specially bad outburst of mad dashing about and fury would cause me to have a somewhat wan and exhausted appearance, as if produced by fatigue. But even this soon vanished, and I should spend the whole of the day happily and busily, studying, running about, and occupied with all my favourite pursuits. On awaking, I never had any

clear recollection of anything that had happened, only a vague impression that I had dreamt about something which oppressed and suffocated me, or had seen something terrible which pursued me. It happened, however, that the effects of those who held me, and who involuntarily uttered loving words in the hope of calming and pacifying me and persuading me to lie down quietly on my bed—it so happened. I say, that the force they were obliged to use, had the effect of bringing me partly back to consciousness; and next day when I was fully awake, I should recollect that something had happened during the night which made me feel very weak; that my parents and several other people had been standing round me: that I could hear the nightingales singing in the bushes just outside the window; and I had heard the moor-hens calling on the other side of the river. My mother was at her wits' end what to do: she was specially terrified by the circumstance that convulsions distorted my face and foam appeared on my lips, during my periods of unconsciousness, signs of sinister portent. The thought that these attacks would develop into actual epilepsy, as Yevsevitsch had long since prophesied in his letter to her, caused her extreme agony. She had ceased giving me the drops prescribed for me by Dr. Benis, and the mixture for purifying the blood-which the State Apothecary had supplied—had never been touched, although Dr. Benis had specially impressed upon her the necessity for me to take it, as he considered me scrofulous (which I never was). My mother encouraged me to bathe in the river, as she thought cold baths would strengthen me: I enjoyed them exceedingly, but they brought no relief of my disorder. My mother now thought of Dr. Benis, and wrote such a masterly account of my illness as quite enchanted the doctor. He thanked her for her valuable notes, sent me a special tea and some pills, and ordered me a regulation diet. All his instructions were carried out to the minutest detail, but no alleviation of my illness resulted; on the contrary the fits became more stubborn and I grew weaker. The use of the tea and pills was abandoned, and experiments were made with old wives' cures; so-called wise men and women being asked to give an opinion on my case. All advised methods of one sort or another; lotions, douches, or fumigations—all to

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regard these humble cures from their own lofty eminence of erudition and enlightenment : in fact I have witnessed so many astonishing and convincing proofs of the efficacy of some of these country therapeutics that I cannot have any doubt on the subject. All the same, they failed in my own case, most probably because they were unsuitable, or perhaps because my mother could not make up her mind to administer the doses. I recollect that for a long time I took powdered fern leaves on the advice of one of our neighbours: only the voungest shoots were used, which sprout, comb-like, from the root between the great indented leaves and stalks of the plant. But the ferns did me no good. At last she was fain to have recourse to a well-known cure, which was highly esteemed in the family in the time of my grandparents: but which my mother had hitherto regarded with the utmost disdain, refusing to allow such a remedy, although my aunt had proposed it over and over again. This stuff was called "Benzoin Drops for Epilepsy," as benzoin resin was its principal ingredient. The dose consisted of ten drops in half-a-glass of water, and the water became white like milk when the medicine was added to it. The dose was increased by two drops daily, until the maximum of five-and-twenty drops was reached; and the potion was always administered at night. I started taking this remedy, and the very first dose did me visible good; at the end of a month my disorder completely disappeared, never to return. As soon as the dose reached five-and-twenty drops, it was reduced daily by two drops, until it concluded with the original ten drops.1 Meanwhile I continued my cold baths and ate just what I pleased. What a fuss would have been made if any celebrated physician had cured me so swiftly and effectively! My poor mother breathed freely once more, likewise my father and all around me; especially the housekeeper, Pelagia, who had tended me untiringly during my illness, entertaining me with fairy tales at night and continuing to tell them long after I had fallen off to sleep. As for 1 Which would involve a reduction of one or three drops on one day. [Tr.]

no purpose. This has not in any way prejudiced me against folk-physick, especially in conjunction with magnetism; long ago I ceased feeling any of that contempt with which so many

my mother, she was as delighted as if she had rescued me a second time from the Gymnasium. And how often it happens that folks go wandering abroad in search of a remedy which, all the time, is lying at hand at home. Now I will retrace my steps a little.

In spite of the appalling character of my disorder, I never ceased my studies, nor my rustic pursuits, during the whole of its duration, merely reducing the hours of work or play when an attack had been specially violent; on such occasions my mother kept me under her own strict observation and would not permit me to leave her side for long. Each forenoon, so long as the day was fairly cool. I went fishing with Yevseyitsch. The best spot for fishing was in our own garden almost directly opposite the windows, as just below Aksakovo there was a mill with a great mill pond in the Mordvin village of Kivazkoie, and the stow-water reached almost to our garden. Hereabouts the Buguruslan was practically the upper affluent of the Kivazkoie pond; and all friends of the rod and line can guess what an advantageous position this would be. Here, for the first time in my life, I experienced that crowning joy of the angler, the landing of big fish. Hitherto I had only caught bream, perch, and gudgeon; and although the two first varieties had sometimes been of quite a respectable size, still no very big specimen had ever fallen a prey to my hook; and even if it had so happened that I had a bite, I could not have landed a big fish, as I had only angled with a thin line and a very small hook. Yevseyitsch twisted a couple of lines, each composed of twenty horse hairs and each carrying a thick hook firmly attached to it; these lines were fastened to stout fishing rods: then, carrying his own rod, Yevseyitch led me to his own secret place in the garden, which he called the "Golden Spot." After putting a bit of black bread the size of a big hazel-nut on the hook, he cast my line directly under an overhanging bush, laying his own rod down on the bank between the grass and the sedge. I sat as still as a mouse, never removing my eyes from my float, which bobbed slowly backwards and forwards, as the water pressed on the bank just In a few minutes Yevseyitsch suddenly jumped up, exclaiming: "Here's one, young Master!" and began tewing about with a big fish, while he grabbed his rod with

both hands. The truth was that Yevseyitsch had no real gift for angling, and only depended on brute strength; the fish had evidently been hooked in the grass or the rushes, the rod was only a simple pole, the line broke, and we had no chance of even seeing what sort of a fish it was. Yevseyitsch flew into such a dreadful rage that I really trembled at the sight of him. He swore and cursed, and vowed that it was the biggest fish he had ever caught in his life; but in all probability he had only hooked an ordinary carp or chub, which, being entangled in the grass, would appear much heavier than it actually was. As soon as my guardian had reeled off my second line, he cast it directly in the same spot as that where his last bite had been, remarking as he did so: "No doubt I was a bit too hasty; I will be more cautious this time." With this, he seated himself on the grass to await fresh prev, but with no result. Now it was my turn, and Fate proved kind; slowly my float began to right itself and then to list to one side; suddenly it stood erect, and vanished under the water: I began to pull, and a great fish slowly rose to view, as if he were resisting the strain. Yevseyitsch hurried up to me and seized my rod: but I, recollecting his recent remark, never ceased urging him to go very cautiously to work. Thanks to the stout new line and the not too pliant fishing rod,1 which I never released from my own grasp, with infinite pains we finally succeeded in landing a very noble carp, on whom Yevseyitsch pounced bodily, as he shouted: "Here he is, the old rascal! This time he shall not get away!" I trembled for joy as if in a fever (and many a time and oft this happened to me in later life when I had the luck to hook a big fellow); for a long time I was quite unable to contain myself and kept running to look at my carp, who was lying in the grass on the river bank at a safe distance from the water. We cast our lines again, but had no more bites that day. At the end of half-an-hour we returned to the house, as I had only permission to stay out for a short time. This first happy

¹ As a rule a pliable rod is necessary in order to land big fish successfully—a rigid one is no good; but at this place the carp—contrary to all the laws of angling—could only be landed by actual strength; and for this it was necessary to have a stiff rod, bending very slightly only, the line being so strong that it held the fish fast.

capture had the effect of turning me into a most ardent fisherman. We put a stick through the fish's gills and I carried him to my father, who was a great lover of angling. At that time it was not our custom to weigh our big catches, but I do not think I ever caught a bigger carp than that fellow; at the least he must have weighed seven pounds.

My father frequently took me out shooting, which was a favourite sport of his. These expeditions were red-letter days for me, and I took the greatest interest in everything I saw, although my share of the sport was limited to the task of retrieving the birds shot by my father. I was never allowed to handle a gun. But three years later, during the summer holidays (as I shall relate in due season), I fired my first shot with a fowling-piece! After that, every form of sport, even angling, ceased to possess any charm for me, and for the rest of my life I was a passionate votary of the gun.

August was drawing towards its end when my illness finally disappeared; the carp and chub had long since ceased to bite, but I had the good fortune to land several specimens of considerable size, while it may be conjectured that I had let a good many more escape. As a set-off against this, bream and perch fishing was still in full swing. Besides all this I took great pleasure in watching the falcons. As early as July, the last year's birds had been flown for quail: the young nestlings were already trained, and our falconry proceeded very merrily. Nikanor Tanaitschenok and Vanka Masan took charge of the old birds, and Feodor and my guardian Yevseyitsch had the care of the young ones. I had a little merlin of my own; she was very well trained, and I flew her at sparrows and other small birds. Very frequently I used to accompany one of the falconers-generally Yevseyitsch-riding across the fields in a long country wagon; and I thoroughly enjoyed the chase of the plump autumn quails and the meadow landrails. So passed the summer and the early days of autumn, crowded with all these country delights, to which must be added berrypicking expeditions and, later, mushroom-gathering.1

¹ In those days I had no idea that mushrooms were to become one of the joys of my existence, even in my old age. Recollecting this, for a long time past it has been my intention (and I see no reason why I should not carry out my project) to write a little book on mushrooms and on the charm of mushrooming-expeditions.

My mother had no taste for country outings. It was seldom, indeed, that she could be persuaded to accompany me and my father in our rambles in field or forest. I do remember. however, that the splendid strawberries, which grew in the richest profusion each summer, would occasionally tempt her to visit some uncultivated land not very far from our house, as she was exceedingly fond of this fruit and thought it very wholesome and good for her health. She would likewise accompany us to the wild and beautiful mountain springs where the whole family frequently had tea together, seated in the birchen shade; but mushroom-gathering she considered intolerably stupid. My father and aunt, on the contrary, took the greatest pleasure in "going a-mushrooming," and I shared their liking for this occupation. The worst of it all was that my mother never could endure our beloved Aksakovo. She considered the situation very low-lying and damp (to a certain extent this was quite true); the smell from the pond and the dam disgusting; the water from the well hard and full of chalk; and the whole place thoroughly unhealthy. This verdict contained much truth, but much more prejudice and exaggeration. It must be recollected that my mother had been born and bred in a city; and, to her, residence in any country place whatever or wherever, would have been a weariness. It used to anger us children and our father when we listened to her frequent and scornful criticism of Aksakovo: and although none of us ventured to dispute her word, we all secretly resented her remarks and had no sympathy with her dislike of the place. Although she lived in the country, my mother did not lead a country life. She occupied herself with her children, read a great deal, and carried on an extensive correspondence with her friends: these last, for the most part, were eminent persons, who (although they might only have been temporarily resident in Ufa, or merely have visited the place for a short stay) had been so struck by my mother's personality that ever afterwards they cherished a feeling of respectful devotion for her. She was exceedingly fond of medical works, and Dr. Buchan's Domestic Medicine, or The Family Physician, was her great authority. She was quite at home amongst all these books on physic, as for many years she had nursed her invalid father; she had a medicine

chest, and used to prescribe for illnesses and sick persons herself; not only for members of her own family and peasants on the estate, but also for neighbours, and had many sick pensioners from the outlying villages. My father was her active supporter in this work of healing and charity. She never took the slightest part in household matters.

Autumn now came, and, one by one, our pleasures dwindled away; the days grew short and dim; rain and cold drove everyone indoors. Now I began to spend more time with my mother, and applied myself more to study; that is to say I wrote fair copies and read aloud. On the long evenings my father would read aloud to us, and so would my mother occasionally, and she read remarkably well. Although my father had not received much literary culture from his own family circle (my grandparents had been accustomed to the perusal of the almanac, and a couple of dreary pamphlets, one entitled Harlem Drops, and the other something about an Elixir of Life) he had a natural taste for reading; in proof of which he had collected a great number of the songs and poems of that period, which he had copied out in printed script with his own hand. I have this collection now. mother had encouraged his taste for literature, and thus this family reading of evenings was of great interest to him. I recall these evenings, at which my aunt, Yevgenia Stepanovna, was always present, with the greatest delight. Our literary entertainments were enhanced by the consumption of cedar and hazel nuts which we toasted on the stove-both very bad for my mother who, nevertheless, was excessively fond of them. A copper box full of these delicacies used to make its appearance upon the table, together with a little pair of nippers and a small pestle for cracking the nuts. When I was quite absorbed by the reading, however, I used to find these rival delights somewhat annoving, as they distracted me, and prevented me from listening properly to what was being read.

¹ The destiny of this little coffer was somewhat remarkable. My mother had it with her other wedding gear, filled with laces and ribbons. This was in 1788: during the nineties and up to the year 1801 it used to be filled with dried nuts: in the year 1807 it contained more than a hundred thousand roubles in cash and securities, in addition to pearls and brilliants of great value: it now stands under my son's writing table, crammed with old deeds and documents.

When my mother felt rather better than usual, and consequently would be in a good humour, she was a delightful companion, full of fun, making everyone around her laugh. There were two novels in particular—Francisco Petroccis, and Elias Bendel's Adventure—which always caused a great deal of derisive laughter, because of their innate silliness, and the clumsy and ungrammatical way in which they had been translated into Russian. But when my mother criticised these works in her own witty and vivacious manner, her auditors were so tickled that they literally rocked with laughter; and the reading would be quite interrupted for a while. On the other hand books were frequently read in which we all took the deepest interest, which often excited lively sympathy, and would even draw tears from us.

The advent of winter, with the earliest snow and slight frost, still afforded me opportunities for certain diversions for a time, because hares, both grey and white, can be caught in the snow. My father would take me with him and, accompanied by a crowd of all manner of folks, we would surround the hare, crouching in its form, with nets on nearly every side. Then from the side facing it, the whole party of hunters would rush forward, shouting and hallooing, and the terrified creature would spring up and dash into the nets. I used to rush with the others and shout and bellow, and naturally grow more excited than anyone there. I was exceedingly fond of this sport and never tired of discussing it with my father. In fact, whenever my mother was busy with something or other, or wearied by my questions and teasing or perhaps feeling unwell, she was accustomed to pack me off to my father, saving: "Now go, and talk to him about the hares!" and then my father and I would talk everlastingly on this subject. Besides hare-hunting we had another favourite sport, setting traps for little beasts of prey, such as polecats, ermines, and weasels. The sleek and beautiful skins of the victims were suspended as trophies above my bed. But soon the snow covered the earth in deepest drifts, snow-storms raged incessantly, and all my out-of-door recreations were at a complete standstill. What a grim and dreary spectacle is a snow storm-not only out on the desolate steppe, but seen from the windows of a cosy dwelling! It masks the

window panes, whirls its flakes even into the house itself, obliterates every trace of any path leading from the house to the servants' quarters, and spades and shovels must continually be plied to keep a way open-a few steps, and a man is swallowed up in snow! The snow-drifts grow higher and deeper, piled up incessantly until it would appear that they will never vanish; an irresistible despondency weighs down the heart! No dweller in cities can have any conception of this condition of Nature; but any native of the plains can comprehend and sympathise with my feelings. Now I was an actual prisoner within the walls of our dwelling, and no account of persuasion would induce my mother to permit me to sally forth with my father, who frequently visited the stake nets, that is to say, certain spots where the river flowed over sand banks through hurdles or rows of posts set closely together interwoven with wicker. During the interval between Christmas and the New Year—sometimes even earlier—eels of great size were very frequently entangled between these stakes. When brought indoors, they were sometimes frozen quite stiff owing to the intense cold: they were then placed in a great tub full of water, where the dark green, dappled. big-bellied, eels would gradually thaw and begin to move their languid tails and their feathery fins feebly, and then to splash about a little. I could scarcely tear myself away from the tub side, as I watched their movements, springing back when they splashed me with water, as they lashed their tails. father always kept a good stock of eels in his big enclosed fish pond: and sayoury eel soup, and still more sayoury pies composed of eels' liver, used to make an almost daily addition to our diet, until we were so sated that we ceased to enjoy them. After that, we only had eels occasionally, and the rest of the fish were reserved for eating during Lent.

My mother as I have already told you was a city-bred woman. Her childhood and early girlhood had been over-clouded by harsh and unmerited ill-treatment and oppression, which circumstances had afterwards changed, and hence-forward she had associated with people of superior attainments. This association, coupled with her own love of reading, had created in her a sort of false breeding, which frequently manifested itself in scorn and contempt for plain and simple

All these influences and characteristics combined to produce in her an intolerant feeling of positive dislike for any old-world, rustic diversions, such as country-dances, folk songs or Christmas-tide mumming. She had neither conception of, nor sympathy with these customs, and frankly detested them. In complete contrast to her, my aunt, born and brought up in the country, loved everything connected with these old customs. She frequently held Christmas games, and had carol singing in her room; and the sweet magic of the old folk-melodies penetrated through the adjacent chambers to my ears, setting my heart in a tumult of tender and inexplicable melancholy. I was very indignant at being refused permission to be present at these Christmas gatherings, far less to take part in them; and the consequence of this prohibition was that I plotted how to deceive my devoted and dearly-loved mother. I had, be it understood, begun by continually entreating my mother to let me share these games, and by demanding to know why I was not allowed to do so. My mother replied in a very severe and resolute way that much that was stupid, wrong, and disreputable took place during these revels, which were neither fit for me to see nor to hear; that I was only a child, and still unable to distinguish right from wrong. But as I had never seen anything evil or, at any rate, had not been able to recognise anything of the sort, I obeyed her very unwillingly, without any inward conviction of the truth of her remarks and with a feeling of great discontent. My aunt and the maidservants, on the contrary, argued very differently; they explained to me that my mother's disposition was such that she was discontented with everyone and everything in the country: this was the reason she was always ailing; and because she was unhappy herself, she wished to make everyone around her miserable. This sort of talk wrought secretly upon my childish mind, and, as a result of this, my aunt on one occasion persuaded me to come and see the fun on the sly; and this is how it happened. During the whole of Christmas week, my mother was either out of sorts or out of humour; she could not tolerate the family-reading, so my father was obliged to read aloud to her, very slowly, out of some dull or very familiar volume, in order to lull her to sleep. It was her habit to take

a two hours' nap every evening after tea, which we always drank at six o'clock. While she slept, I sat with my aunt, and it was during these hours of liberty that she (my aunt) coaxed me into going to watch the revels in her company. I was muffled from head to foot in furs, and then carried by my aunt's robust maid, Matrona, to the carpenter's shop, where the whole household of young folks were expecting us. They were all disguised as bears, turkeys, cranes, or old men and women. In spite of the evil-smelling tallow lamps, whose smoky beams only illuminated the vast room in part-in spite of the oppressiveness of the mephitic atmosphere—what pure happiness reigned over these Christmas games! The wondrous notes of Christmas hymns, sung to melodies of most ancient times, sounded like some echo from an unknown world—notes which still preserve their enchantment and power, which will never cease to exercise their sway over the hearts of the vast multitude of posterity! Everyone seemed intoxicated with happiness-daft with joy. The bursts of hearty laughter frequently drowned the songs and dialogues. These were no actors nor actresses, strutting about for the amusement of others: no, these inspired singers and dancers sang and danced for sheer joy, rejoicing in the fullness of their own hearts: and each spectator was an enraptured sharer of their performance. All sang and laughed laughed and chattered and in the very middle of the revels, in the whirl and vapour of the boisterous and universal rejoicing, the same pair of strong hands bundled me up in my fur mantle and carried me off by force from this enchanted land of faery. It was long before I slept that night; strange figures danced and sang around my bed, and visited me even in my dreams.1 Although I was, in a manner of speaking,

¹ I recollect an old Christmas mumming play with its accompanying songs and dances, which, as I now gather, has already disappeared totally from the recollection of those in whose presence I actually saw it performed in their native Province. Someone disguised as a very old man sits on a bench or log in the middle of the room, while his young wife, in a rustic headdress and silk bodice, dances round him, singing a lament over the infirmities of her spouse, accompanied by a chorus of voices. While singing this lamentation—which, to the best of my remembrance consisted of eight verses or so, all of which I have forgotten except the couplet which concluded each verse, and ran as follows:

[&]quot;Oh, you useless, silly, old soul" You cause me nought but sorrow and dole!"

suddenly persuaded, and even forced to, deceive my mother on this first occasion, in consequence of which I avoided meeting her eyes for a time—still these games had such a charm for me that I readily assented to go and watch them the next night, and afterwards would tease my aunt into taking me with her.

At last the cruel reign of winter drew towards its close and the terrible cold began to diminish gradually. In those days we did not possess a thermometer, so I cannot tell you how many degrees of frost were registered; but I do recollect that numbers of birds perished, and sparrows and jackdaws were frequently brought to me, which had fallen down while in full flight and had instantly been frozen; some of these I warmed and cherished back to life. I must here observe that generally speaking those winters of my childhood and early boyhood were far colder than those of the present day. Nor is this one of those flights of imagination in which old folks are so apt to indulge now and again; when I was living in Kazan the quicksilver froze twice before New Year, 1807,² and we could mould and knead it like molten iron. This fact is now established as a wonder of the old days in Kazan.

The sun began to gain power: the roads grew smooth and slippery: now came the Shrove-tide, and the joys of sliding down the ice hills dawned. Alas, my mother would on no account permit me to participate in the general enjoyment of this pastime. I was only allowed to go in a sledge with my

the woman keeps approaching the man, bidding him go and plough the field. The old fellow coughs, wheezes, groans, and to her exhortation replies in a trembling voice: "Oh, I'm far too weak for that!" This makes the spectators laugh. The young wife thereupon sings another verse with the choir, and again dances round her husband. In this way all the routine of crop-growing is followed; and to each behest whether to plough, sow, hoe, reap and so on, the old man invariably replies: "Oh, I'm far too weak for that!" frequently accompanying his refusal with comical remarks and exclamations. At last the wife comes to the last verse, in which she informs her lazy husband that, at the conclusion of their labours, all industrious folk quit the fields for home, where they brew lots of beer; she then advances to him, and bids him accompany her to a neighbour's house to drink beer. Upon hearing this, up springs the old invalid, as lively as possible, replies gaily: "Come along, little mother!" and hobbles off as fast as he can, dragging his wife with him. The loud hearty laughter of the spectators breaks out afresh at this conclusion of the little drama.

 2 The author reckons by O.S. The actual date would be about twelve days later—some time in January. $[{\rm Tr.}]$

sister-and sometimes with my little brother-and be a passing envious spectator of the crowd of peasant lads and lasses who, ruddy-cheeked with excitement and cold, glided sheer from the threshing floor on the mountain height down the icy slope on their little hand-sledges or skates. Many of these poor children were only provided with old sieves or round baskets made of bark, which they had transformed into a sort of skate by wetting the underface and then letting it freeze. Joyful cries and laughter escaped from the merry troop, as they scrambled and fell about in grotesque and absurd attitudes—some enthusiastic skater perchance rolling headlong with his legs flying up in the air; or as when some basket containing a wee maiden would whirl round and tip over, the small occupant having anticipated the accident to her equipage by a series of shrieks and screams. longed to join in all this tumultuous noise and jollity; and how stupid our solitary and select bit of sleighing seemed on the little ice-hill erected in the garden outside the drawingroom windows, compared with this spectacle of fun and enjoyment. The only thing that consoled me was the fact that I might have my sister's company.

With the coming of Lent, all these not too numerous winter pleasures ended. I must admit that we did not observe the great fast too strictly, either with prayer or mortification. My mother was too delicate to abstain from her regular diet. and, for the like reason, I did not keep the fast either. My father, it is true, ate no meat at the season of the Assumption, nor during Lent: but considering that his fast-table was spread from our rich store of Ural sturgeon, frozen sterlet. fresh caviare, and live eels, perhaps he fared even better than if he had eaten meat only. As yet we had no church of our own and the nearest place of worship was nine versts distant. in the village of Mordvin-Buguruslan. We were not particularly fond of the priest and we only went to church at the great festivals. Here I may remark that our family. without being positively irreligious, was quite accustomed to get on without attending any service, as so frequently happens in the country when the church is at a great distance. During this Lent I did not fail to continue my tutorship, and my little pupil's lessons were somewhat extended; she had ceased

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to cause me any vexation, on the contrary, I was charmed with the progress she made. We played together with her dolls, and I built castles and towns for her with her blocks, and sometimes read aloud to her from story-books, explaining them as I went along.

My mother was continually distressed and put out of humour by this or that anxiety; she devoted less of her time to me, while I, once more under the influence of my own tranquil reflections and roused from my childish insouciance by my life in the Gymnasium (the fresh impressions received while there having by no means been obliterated from my memory by my return to country life) failed to find the careless enjoyment of yore in my favourite pursuits. I began to observe what happened around me with increased attention and comprehension; while many things began to lose something of their charm and delight. A feeling of melancholy, hitherto unknown to me, began to overshadow all my pursuits and games. I cannot omit mentioning these disturbing elements, as they alone serve to explain how it was that, at the end of a few months, my life at Aksakovo ceased to appear in its earlier Paradisaical light; and why a second entry into the life of the Gymnasium, especially as a paying pupil, should have lost all its terrors for me.

The winter was long and stubborn. Spring came but slowly into her own, and it was only at the end of April that the soft vernal air with its breezes and showers could gradually overcome the terrific snow-drifts, which vanished completely in the course of one week. At Easter the roads were still quite impassable, and we were unable to attend early mass on Easter Day. I was unsettled and discontented throughout Easter Week; my mother was ill and dispirited; my father silent and gloomy; he was continually occupied with the deeds relating to a lawsuit, in connection with an inheritance, which he was bringing against the Bogdanov family, later on to be decided in his favour. Each day he visited the mill to observe how the river was rising. One day he returned unexpectedly early and said to me: "Ask your mother's permission to come out with me, Sergei; we are just going to draw off the water." Off I rushed to ask my mother and had better luck than usual this time, as she

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consented to my going, after she had given me sundry instructions as to keeping my feet dry and guarding against chills. We drove to the mill in a long country cart and found all the peasants waiting for us on the dam, equipped with all the requisite tools and implements. Russian folk take an especial delight in watching running water, and the entire population of Aksakovo had assembled to witness the draining of the mill-pond. Sluices, closed by wooden gates, we had none; and apertures made in the dam for the purpose of draining off the brimming waters had to be stopped every year. (This took the place of a real lock-gate). The pond was very swollen and of a bluish tint; the ice was heaving up, full of cracks and fissures and quite detached from the banks. current had been quite free from ice for some time, and the lock scarcely sufficed to hold the water. The frozen dam on each side of last year's sluice was hacked with axes, crowbars, and iron shovels; scarcely had a yard's depth of the upper layer been removed when the water broke through and, disdaining any farther assistance of mankind, made such short work of the job that at the end of half-an-hour there was a clear road right to the bed of the pond. The turbid, furious waters rushed out in such haste that they instantly formed a great stream which the new river bed was unable to contain, and which overflowed and spread out on each side. As it issued from its winter's imprisonment, everyone around hailed the beloved element with joyful shouts, the women shrieking and screaming with especial gusto, their uproar mingling with the din of the rushing, mighty waters and the roar of the ice as it crashed and cracked. It was an entrancing spectacle, and if a messenger had not arrived from the house to tell us that the dinner-hour had long since been passed, most probably my father and I would have remained standing there until evening.

The forenoon of the following day we returned to the dam and found a different, but equally tumultuous and amusing, scene. After the first impetuous rush the water had become more placid, the pond had dwindled considerably, the smaller fragments of ice had snapped against the stakes and had been swept away, but the large masses were stranded in shallow parts. In a spot, formerly all but dry, where a deep

stream now flows from the sluice, a row of short thick stakes had been driven into the ground; the peasants waded in water up to their waists, and attached a number of weels 1 securely to these posts, and suspended traps and nooses from them. The fish, overwhelmed by the flood, were rolling helplessly about: those which were swept in the current from the sluice were hurled back by the weight of the escaping waters right into the weels and bow-nets. All this time the peasants, drenched to the skin and shivering with cold, though never ceasing to joke and exchange friendly shouts, were dragging their booty to the bank, where women, old men, and boys and girls piled the fish into chip-baskets or sieves; or as often as not packed them into the skirts of their own smocks and lugged them home. After we had selected a few of the biggest fish for ourselves, we went home. My mother was far from pleased at our belated return and it was some time before I was permitted to visit the mill again.

A short time passed and all signs of winter disappeared. Trees and bushes were bedecked with verdure, the young grass was springing up, and Spring appeared in her full panoply. As usual, our garden was soon peopled by all sorts of little songsters, blue-throated warblers and hedge-sparrows, such as have an especial fondness for old currant and barberry bushes; the nightingales began to sing and the mocking birds to mimic their song. As I had spent the previous spring in captivity, confined to a narrow sick room, one might naturally have expected me to welcome this charming rustic spring with especial rapture, but I felt a constant dull pain in my heart and, although I had no actual knowledge whence it proceeded, still I was dimly aware that it infected all my undertakings—the pleasures and occupations of yore—with a feeling of sadness.

During the winter my father had been considering the possibility of erecting a so-called lock-sluice or flood-gate across the dam, and building a new mill. He engaged a certain Krasnov, a mill-engineer, a thorough-going charlatan and swindler as he afterwards turned out to be. During the whole of Lent our peasantry were busy preparing wood

 $^{^{1}\ \}mathit{Weel}\---$ a trap or snare for fish. (Chamber's XXth Century Dictionary).

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for building, big and little beams, laths, and boards, planks and posts; so that a goodly number of these matters should be to hand whenever needed. Immediately after the overflowing waters had drained away, they began to tear down the dam at another point and to make a new sluice there. At the same time the builders began to drive in stakes, and afterwards likewise on the opposite side to erect a big. powerful mill, in which six mill sets could be housed; the stamping mill was to be a quite separate building. This work lasted nearly the whole of the summer. My father placed implicit trust in Krasnov. Our old miller, Boltunenok, and some of our peasants, who knew a bit about mill-building. laughed in their sleeves and shook their heads. father's enquiries however as to what was their opinion of this Krasnov, whether he knew his business or not (he had stretched the complete plan on paper and had the stakes driven in judging by sight only, placing them all correctly) they all replied with the artless cunning of true Russians: 'A clever man, little father, a very clever man! A master of his trade, to be sure! He calculates everything in his head. and everything turns out just as it should. Goodness only knows whether the mill will grind; the water flows very slowly through the ditch and not direct from the current of the stream, and how can it help freezing in winter?" Krasnov only laughed at the peasants' criticism and tradicted them with such self-assurance that my father had not the slightest doubt but that all would turn out well. I likewise listened to Krasnov's fine talk with the deepest respect. During these building operations, the pond was left to itself after draining, and this pond presented such an opportunity for angling as I have never known, before nor since, during the course of my existence. All the fish in the pond congregated together in the river bed. The mass of fish reminded me of a kettle full of good fish-soup. began a really fabulous fishing adventure. I and Yevseyitsch never left the pond, and never in my life have I caught so many fish; even my father who, from lack of leisure, only fished at rare intervals, could now angle from morning to night, as he was obliged to spend the greater part of the day at the mill, superintending the various labours of the men.

Now he could fish away continuously without losing sight of the building operations, and go from time to time to inspect what was being done. Chub, carp, tench, perch, pike, and hefty rudd (frequently weighing over three pounds) never ceasing biting the whole day long. The biggest fish took the biggest bait: whoever put a big bait on his hook was sure of a big capture. I recollect that my father, who was especially keen on perch and pike-fishing, fastened two hooks to his line, which he baited with little fish, and at each cast caught a couple of perch, and on one occasion actually a perch and a pike at the same time. As a rule the pike were taken with pike-tackle, which was baited with decent-sized perch or bleak, and we often took pike of sixteen pounds' weight. goes without saving that—in spite of any sturdy lines and hooks, if the art of angling be not well understood and no hand-net be employed—many big fish will escape. This was our experience, as our rods and hooks snapped and the lines broke. My own Yevsevitsch (who often used to make me Aaugh even when he was quite an old man by his violent style of angling) was peculiarly addicted to this melancholy mode of sport; and it was mainly owing to him that I often lost a fine fellow, as I was not able to land the fish without his assistance, which nearly always proved fatal to my success. The best fishing lasted from spring till the middle of July: then the biggest fish ceased biting—by these I mean carp, rudd, and tench: the other sorts took the bait readily, and probably the first-named would have bitten too, had we but known the secret of using a whole, scalded crayfish as bait.

During the whole of this year my mother exchanged monthly letters with Vasili Petrovitsch Upadyschevski. Many changes had taken place at the Gymnasium: the Director Peken and the Chief Inspector Kamaschev had both retired with pensions: the duties of Director were now administered by the principal professor of Russian History, Ilia Feodorovitsch Yakovkin, and my old friend Upadyschevski was promoted to the post of Chief Inspector. After consulting with the new Director, Vasili Petrovitsch informed my mother that now, should my parents think fit, it would be better for me to return to the Institution, not as a State Alumnus, but as a paying-pupil, and to reside with one of the tutors. He

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mentioned two distinguished young men, Ivan Ipatovitsch Sapolski and Grigori Ivanovitsch Kartaschevski. graduates from the University of Moscow who had joined in renting a large house, where they both dwelt, taking boarders, whom they looked after very carefully, while their terms were exceedingly moderate. My parents were extremely gratified at the news, especially on hearing of the departure of Kamaschev; and although it was a sacrifice for them to pay yearly fees of three hundred roubles, with an additional two hundred for my clothes, books, and the maintenance of my servant, they decided to make an effort in the interest of my education and to raise the necessary sum. They were already in debt to the amount of two thousand roubles (an important sum in those days) and now, in anticipation of inheriting something from Nadeschda Ivanovna Kurovedova. they ventured to incur farther debt. The school-courses at the Gymnasium started on the 15th August; the new pupils were received for admission on the 1st of the same month; and so it was decided we were to travel to Kazan at the end of July. I heard this decision with comparative composure, as my spirits had been growing more and more depressed and unsettled. But when all our preparations were concluded and the day of our departure actually arrived—then, to be separated from my own Aksakovo caused me such pangs, that all at once everything in the place regained its earlier charm and value in my eyes, perhaps even in a greater degree than of old. It seemed to me as if I should never see them again, and I took a farewell of every building, every spot; of every tree and bush; and shed tears while I bid them adieu. I gave away all my possessions; my pigeons to our cook, Stepan and his son; my cat to Sergeieva, the wife of our old, blind steward, Pantelei Grigorvevitsch, a specially skilful man of business, and very well acquainted with legal matters. My fishing tackle and snares I distributed among the servants' children; while my story books, my collection of dried flowers, pictures, and matters of that sort, I bestowed upon my sister, with whom I had dwelt during the past year in such affection as can only exist between an eleven-year-old boy and his nine-year-old sister. I parted from her with the utmost sorrow, and entreated my mother to permit her to accompany us on the journey. My mother at first refused her consent to this, but afterwards relented.

I must here mention that the new mill was first set going about a week before our departure. Alack, the suspicions of Boltunenok and the other peasants proved to have been only too well founded; the water in the crescent-shaped ditch flowed too sluggishly and could not stir the six mill sets; even when four sets were removed, it worked the two remaining ones much more slowly than the old mill. My father, finding himself so sadly deceived as to Krasnov's ability, packed the latter off about his business and commissioned the old miller to try to do his best to mend matters.

Finally, on the 26th July, the same capacious coach was drawn up before the balcony staircase, to which the same six horses were harnessed, conducted by the same coachman and postillion, and surrounded by the self-same crowd of servants and peasants—all gathered there to say good-bye to the family. My parents, I and my sister, and Parascha all took our seats in the carriage: Yevsevitsch climbed on to the box, Feodor sprang up on the monkey board; and the carriage moved slowly away from the balcony, on which stood my Aunt Yevgenia Stepanovna, the nursemaid with my brother, and the head-nurse holding my younger sister in her arms. multitude of peasants accompanied us to the boundary of the estate, showering farewells and blessings upon us every step of the way. The road led by the edge of the pond as far as Krutez, where already a flock of white and dappled gulls was circling aloft. How I envied each peasant boy. He never had occasion to bid adieu to anyone or to any place whatever; he could stay at home and sit, just as he pleased. in the thick shade of an elm tree on the bank of the mill dam. and catch perch and bleak in peace and contentment. He might remain in undisturbed and peaceful possession of the wide pond, which was not overgrown with grass and rushes this year, as it had been drained. . . . The horses, who had been idle in their stalls for a long time, snorted and grew restive, but the strong, practised hand of the coachman controlled them and compelled them to proceed at a walk for a considerable time. Inside the carriage we formed a silent and sorrowful party. I thrust my head out of the window and gazed after my beloved Aksakovo until it disappeared from my view; and silent tears streamed down my cheeks.

SKETCH IX

GYMNASIUM: SECOND PERIOD

On our arrival in Kazan (in the year 1801) we did not put up at the house of Madame (Captain) Aristova, but engaged a better lodging: I cannot recall the name of the street where it was situated, but I do remember that we rented the whole of a little house that belonged to a Monsieur Tschortov, if I am not mistaken in his name. Vasili Petrovitsch Upadyschevski lost no time in paying us a visit. He was greeted by all of us as a near kinsman, benefactor, and friend. He informed us that, as yet, Yakovkin was only performing the indispensable duties of Director of the Gymnasium; and a rumour was circulating in the city that a certain wealthy citizen, of the name of Lichatschev, was going to be nominated Director. He added that this was just the right moment for me to be admitted to the Gymnasium as a paying pupil, as Yakovkin and the entire Committee were of one mind on the question, while the future Director might possibly not look at things in the same light and might make objections. Upadyschevski spoke highly of the recently-arrived tutors from Moscow University—Ivan Ipatovitsch Sapolski, Professor of Natural Philosophy, and Grigori Ivanovitsch Kartaschevski, who taught pure mathematics. He eulogised their intellect, their learning, and their modest bearing. They were good friends, lived together in a handsome stone-built house, and had seven boarders, all paving pupils at the Gymnasium; Rytschkov, the two brothers, Skuridin, Ach-v, and the three brothers Manasein. The board and lodging provided were all that could be desired, and the two heads supervised their boarders' home-work most carefully. They had decided to accept no more boarders; but Upadyschevski had told them my story, and had said such flattering things about me and my family, that the young men had acceded to his request

and had consented to make an exception in my case, in the event of my mother consenting to my becoming their boarder.

My father accompanied me to see Yakovkin, and obtained the latter's consent to my re-entering the Gymnasium as a paying-pupil; from thence we proceeded together to visit Ivan Ipatovitsch Sapolski and Grigori Ivanovitsch Kartaschevski. We were received very kindly at both places; but Grigori Ivanovitsch explained that I could only be admitted as his colleague's-Sapolski's-boarder, as they had divided the pupils between them, the three elder ones being directly under his own care. The following year these boys would be leaving the institution after completing the courses of the Gymnasium, and then he (Kartaschevski), intended to live by himself and not to take any boarders. My father cared neither one way nor another which of them took me, but he pressed both the young men to make my mother's acquaintance. The next day they called to see us. From the very first my mother took a great fancy to Grigori Ivanovitsch and she was much disappointed at his not being able to accept me as his boarder; while my father and I were equally in favour of Ivan Ipatovitsch, who had received us in a much more chatty and friendly manner than his serious-minded colleague. When my mother urged the two friends to reconsider their decision as to separating, and to continue fulfilling their lofty and beneficial duties together, Grigori Iyanovitsch replied very solemnly that he considered his trust one of the utmost importance and gravity; but the responsibility for the mental development of these young lads-which he owed no less to himself than to their parents—was too great, and hindered him from making full progress in the science in which he himself was but a pupil. The answer was made in such a decided tone as brooked no farther argument, which indeed would have been quite out of place. The young men then took their departure, leaving my mother in a state of extreme dissatisfaction caused by her own too-impulsive temperament. Her fancies and affections were always bestowed with such passion that now she must needs extol Grigori Ivanovitsch's excellent attributes to Heaven, while she discovered no end of defects in his colleague. As things turned out, my mother's warm sympathy with the former had not been misplaced.

While Ivan Ipatovitsch was a very good fellow in the ordinary sense of the term-Grigori Ivanovitsch belonged to that small section of humanity whose high moral standard is confined to the very few, and whose whole life bears the imprint of lofty ideals. For my part I was heartily glad that I was going to be in the care of the good-humoured Ivan Ipatovitsch and was not to be amongst the big boys, who had their own separate quarters, but was to be placed with those of my own age, who would be as jolly and good-natured as myself. Thanks to Upadyschevski's assistance, all our affairs were settled without the slightest difficulty; and, at the end of a month, my parents and my sister returned to Aksakovo. During this month Grigori Ivanovitsch, confirmed stav-at-home though he was. had been a constant visitor at our house, where he had learnt to appreciate my mother, between whom and himself a firm and lasting friendship had arisen. This friendship, founded as it was on mutual esteem, was to be proved on many occasions in years to come.

My second parting with my mother was not nearly so heart-rending as the first had been. I was so conscious of this change in myself that, in spite of my childish years, I was bewildered and brooded sorrowfully upon it. But my new existence soon claimed all my attention. I and the three Manasein brothers were accommodated in the same room and we instantly became good friends. Ach—v occupied a little room of his own next door to us. He was very rich and, if I recollect aright, an only son, his mother being a widow. In spite of his wealth—which was visible in his clothes, bed furnishings, and the like—he was very miserly. In his room stood a great, iron-bound chest, the key of which he always carried in his pocket. My companions whispered that he kept all sorts of jewels and treasure in this coffer, and we all regarded it with unbounded curiosity.

At last I was to gaze once more upon the once so hated and dreaded Gymnasium; and this time to see it without any fear or any sensation of horror. This was a matter of great satisfaction to me. Once again I was admitted into the Lower School, which the greater part of my former fellow-pupils had quitted for the Middle School; while new scholars had taken their places, who were not so advanced as I was. Those pupils who had not succeeded in being promoted to a higher class

were either lazy or stupid; and thus it fell out that in a very short time I was ahead of them all in every subject, excepting the Catechism and Bible History. The priest who conducted the Scripture Classes always cherished a dislike for me, although the lessons which I prepared for him were invariably correct. It is worthy of record that when the good man was once asked by Upadyschevski how it was that Aksakov—the best and most industrious pupil in all other subjects—was not included among his (the priest's) best workers . . . was it possible, by any chance, that he did not prepare his exercises? . . . the holy man could only reply: "No, he prepares his tasks very well, but he takes no interest in his Catechism, nor in Bible History."

Several months passed away: the last lingering vestiges of longing for home and the free life of the country wore themselves out; gradually I grew accustomed to school-life, made some friends in the Gymnasium, and grew attached to it. This change of attitude must be partly attributed to the fact that I only went to the Gymnasium for my lessons and did not live there. Our life at Ivan Ipatovitsch's did not present such a violent contrast to my home-life as had my former imprisonment in a State institution, among a horde of boys of every description.

Ach-v, who had been very distant in his manner towards me and the Manaseins, as he was, indeed, to all the pupils in the Gymnasium, observed that I was of a retiring and conciliatory disposition, and began to be friendly with me and invite me into his room: he even went so far as to share some of the dainties, which he constantly received from home, with me, although he was accustomed to devour them alone and in secret. And he continually promised to shew me the contents of his famous chest, but only on condition that no one else was to know anything about it. I was delighted. In my imagination—so steeped in fairy lore—the chest must be the store-house of priceless jewels and ingots of gold and It was arranged between Ach-v and myself that I should visit his chamber when all were asleep. That was possible that same night. The Manaseins did not keep me waiting long and soon were snoring merrily, while I crept into Ach--v's room, where a little night-lamp was burning before a great richly-gilded ikon. The owner of the chamber

lighted a candle, locked the door, extracted a farther promise from me that no one should ever know what he was about to shew me, and then cautiously opened the mysterious chest! But how great was my astonishment! The box was crammed with drawings, steel engravings, and quite ordinary wood cuts! Amongst these treasures were sundry landscapes and portraits painted in oils, of about the same artistic value as the signs which hang outside barbers' saloons. I was very, very fond of pictures, but as I had been expecting something so utterly different, I paid no attention to these works of art and kept on hoping that the real treasures would be revealed at the very bottom of the box. But when the last sheets had been removed and nothing but the bare boards lay exposed to my gaze, I involuntarily exclaimed: " Is that all?" and put poor Ach—v into a state of extreme embarrassment, as he had counted on my being charmed and enraptured by his exhibition. I explained to him in a hasty whisper and with the utmost candour what we all had imagined the coffer to contain. "You are a lot of blockheads!" said Ach—v in a passion, and he nearly bundled me out of the room. And thus our bovish friendship ended. After a while I broke my promise. and told the Manaseins what was treasured-up in the box: and we often used to amuse ourselves by peeping through a chink in the door to watch Ach-v who, after he had carefully drawn the bolt, would take out and arrange his artistic treasures on the bed, tables, chairs, and even spread them all over the floor. He would then contemplate them, dust them carefully, and gloat over them exactly like Puschkin's avaricious knight with his treasures; he spent hours daily—for the most part at night—enjoying himself in this curious manner. We made all sorts of fun of him and told the Gymnasium pupils all about his passion for pictures; and after that the mischievous boys gave him no peace, but were continually persecuting him to share his delights with others and shew them "The Mice Burying the Tom Cat," or "Yeruslan Lasarevitsch Killing a Countless Multitude of Mussulmans" . . . Ach--v was furious, abused them, and fought them; but it was no use. His life was made a burden to him, and at last he wrote and told his mother, who immediately took him away from the Gymnasium. There may have been

other reasons for his departure. Not so very long ago I happened to hear that Ach——v developed into a very eccentric individual, but had the reputation of being very skilful in the management of his estates.

During the first months after my arrival in Ivan Ipatovitsch's house, he occupied himself a great deal with me, somewhat neglecting the other boarders. His whole work with us consisted in enquiring what our tasks were before we sat down to study them, and teaching us to read French and German. Gradually, however, he ceased to trouble himself about us at all and spent but little time at home. To put the matter very plainly, it was all the better for our education that he did absent himself so frequently, as during his absence Grigori Ivanovitsch took us in charge, and instructed us far better and far more carefully than his colleague, as I fully realised at the time. After a time Yevsevitsch told me a secret. Ivan Ipatovitsch was paying court to a rich girl of good family: the young lady and her mother favoured his suit, only the father was very averse to the idea of his daughter marrying a poor devil of a tutor who, moreover, was only the son of a priest. This news sounded as if it might be true.

The landed proprietor, Lichatschev, was finally appointed to the post of Director of the Gymnasium; but it was a long time before he interviewed any of the paying-pupils, it being his custom to attend the institution merely at dinner time and never during school-hours. I applied myself to my studies with great zeal and grew quite fond of the Gymnasium. Whether it was that my former comrades had developed into quite different sort of boys or whether I, myself, had changed, I cannot say; but the worrying and teasing which I had found so intolerable ceased entirely, and we discovered mutual interests, endless subjects of conversation, and at last I used to look forward to school with impatience. I may mention that my school hours were principally occupied by my lessons: and my pride and ambition were greatly enhanced by the praise of my tutors and by a certain respect paid me by the other boys, which, however, in no wise prevented me joining in all their games and fun during play-hours and on every possible occasion. I wrote home every week and received

an affectionate weekly letter from my mother, frequently enclosing one from my father. My mother assured me that she had ceased to grieve over our parting and was only too delighted to hear of the good progress I had made and how well I had behaved, as both Ivan Ipatovitsch and Upadyschevski had told her all about me. And I fully believed that she was not unhappy. With each letter she sent her compliments to Ivan Ipatovitsch and Grigori Ivanovitsch: and, from time to time, corresponded with each of them. And thus a whole school year passed away, that is to say until June, 1802. During the course of this month the examinations were held, which resulted in a complete triumph for me in every subject, and I was promoted to the Middle School. At the beginning of July on Speech Day, I received a little book with this superscription in gold letters: "For Industry and Good Progress," and a Certificate of Merit, in addition.

A plain travelling-carriage with three horses and the coachman had already been sent to convey me home; and after dinner on Speech Day Yevseyitsch and I turned our faces towards our own dear Aksakovo. We took the identical road traversed by me and my mother two years previously, after she had succeeded in procuring my release as a State Alumnus, and we even baited and halted for the night at the self-same stations. And soon the breath of Nature permeated my whole being, and chased the Gymnasium—schoolfellows tutors-books-and exercises right out of my head. After apparently forgetting the beauty of God's world, or at least cooling in my love for it, my old passion flamed up still more ardently and with a clearer understanding of its loveliness. Arrived at home I was greeted with ineffable tenderness by all my dear ones: and the joy of my mother cannot be described! How tall and beautiful my sister had grown in one short year, and how delighted she was to see me again! What had we not to ask and tell each other? Amongst other secrets she told me that at first my mother had grown positively ill with pining after me, and it caused me a pang when I remembered how easily I had parted from her that second time.

The whole of the holidays that I spent at Aksakovo in those days seem to have blended together in one long and endless day of bliss! Even if I wished, I could by no means

tell you how I spent these happy days! I only know that the hours from morning to night were an unbroken delight for me. Out of this fulness of joy, fishing, bathing, and fowling stand out in relief. My mother made me relate to her how I had spent my year at the Gymnasium, not omitting a single detail, and as I talked, she would frequently remark to my father: "You see, Timofei Stepanovitsch, I was not mistaken in Grigori Ivanovitsch. Between him and that Ivan Ipatovitsch there's a difference as wide as the whole Heaven. I was most anxious then that he should have charge of Sergei, and I intend to do my utmost to carry my point now. Yevsevitsch's reports only served to confirm her in her opinion still more strongly, while I myself began to recognise the importance of her project and to hope she would succeed in it. More especially my mother was attracted by the strict integrity of Grigori Ivanovitsch's character. . . . My sister and I were inseparable, our friendship had grown closer and more affectionate. The happy days fled only too swiftly; and, on the 10th of August, Yevseyitsch and I started for Kazan in the same old carriage with the same coachman and horses.

On arriving in the city I found all my fellow-boarders assembled: but Ivan Ipatovitsch was absent. We heard that he was in the country where he was on the point of wedding his bride, Nastasia Petrovna Yelagina; and a month after the marriage they were returning to Kazan, where they would occupy a house of their own and receive us there: meanwhile Grigori Ivanovitsch was left to look after us. This was a great joy for me, but the Manaseins were very much annoyed, especially the youngest brother, Yelpidifor, a very handsome boy, but a hopeless dunce, who had no love for his books-(a dunce, however, who proved himself a very clever man of business in years to come). How well I can recall my entry into the Middle School and my impatience and greed for learning. I was perfectly aware that the lessons would be much more difficult, and that the Middle School course was the most important part of the whole Gymnasium education. There was an old saying that a pupil who distinguished himself in the Middle School would infallibly do likewise in the Upper School: while, on the contrary, it frequently happened

that boys who had done very well in the Lower School failed entirely in the Middle course.1 This rumour caused me a good bit of anxiety, and during the whole of the first month I was very apprehensive. The tutors were strangers and knew nothing about us new-comers, who sat apart from the old boys on two specially-reserved forms and were very little noticed by the masters at first. In consequence of the great amount of work to be got through in this Middle School, a great number of the boys remained in it for two years or so; which made it very crowded, so that the tutors were physically incapable to giving their attention to every pupil equally. In addition to other subjects in this division of the School. Slavonic grammar was taught, together with Russian grammar from a Compendium on the subject, which our tutor himself had compiled. This last was called Nikolai Michailovitsch Ibrahimov² and was a graduate from the Moscow University: he taught not only Russian, but also mathematics, to us boys in the Middle School. This man exercised a considerable influence on my later literary career and I cherish his memory dearly. He was the first to encourage me and, if I may use the expression, to set my feet on their present path. Ibrahimov used to dictate his Slavonic grammar to those pupils who were beginners, who as yet possessed no copy of his book: as a rule one of us would write on the black-board to his dictation, while the rest copied what the boy wrote. The explanations given by Ibrahimov were not sufficiently comprehensive and were very difficult to understand. They sufficed for those who were studying the grammar for the second time, but they were of little use to the new pupils, especially for twelve-year-old boys such as myself and many others. great good fortune Grigori Ivanovitsch was supervising my home work at this time (owing to Ivan Ipatovitsch's absence) and he fully explained to me the "Introduction to Slavonic

¹ It is quite obvious that this dividing of the whole Gymnasium Course into three classes only was a mistake. Experience has proved this, and the present Course is extended through seven classes.

² His surname and personal appearance bore witness to his Tartar or Bashkir origin: he had an enormous head, small and piercing but very good-humoured looking eyes; wide cheek bones, and a remarkably big mouth. He was an enthusiastic lover of literature, extremely sagacious, and altogether a very highly-gifted man.

Grammar," which contained a survey of universal grammar. Without assistance I should have been as ignorant of the meaning of this survey as the rest of the pupils. As I had been provided beforehand with a complete work on Slavonic Grammar, I used to study this on Sundays and, if I came across a passage which I could not understand. I used to ask Grigori Ivanovitsch to explain it to me. This proved very useful to me later. At last, six weeks after the beginning of the school year (September being already past) the following occurrence took place. After Ibrahimov's little Tartar figure had trotted, note book in hand, the length of his very lengthy class-instead of setting to work to dictate aloud, as was his custom, he suddenly turned towards the benches filled with new pupils. My heart began to thump furiously. Ibrahimov now began to ask us boys from the Lower School sundry questions relating to the recent lesson he had given us, namely from the "Introduction," and two chapters of grammar, taking us in the order in which we were seated. We sat thus: first came the State Alumni, then the pensioners, then the semi-pensioners, and lastly the paying-pupils. In answer to Ibrahimov's questions on the grammar a certain number of fairly correct replies were made, but when it came to the turn of the "Introduction," no one knew anything at all about it; a clear proof that it had not been properly explained. Then came my turn. The questions on grammar I answered very composedly and correctly. After each reply Ibrahimov remarked: "Good!" My answers excited his interest and. instead of confining himself to two or three questions, he asked me at least twenty. Every answer was equally correct. Ibrahimov smiled continually to the whole width of his great Tartar mouth, and at last said: "Good, good, good! Now let us see how he manages with the 'Introduction!'" But here I was prepared and answered quite at my ease. tried to trip me up, but it was no use; I knew the subject thoroughly and had not merely learnt it by rote. Ibrahimov was quite astonished and delighted. He overwhelmed me with the most extravagant praise, made me quit my seat, collect all my books and other belongings, and taking my hand led me to the first form and said: "Here is your place!" I was placed third; there were more than forty scholars in

the class! Never had I dreamt of such a triumph as this. I was too happy. As soon as I reached home, I sent Yevsevitsch to ask Grigori Ivanovitsch's permission for me to go and speak to him in his own room; and on his consent being given, brimming over with joyous excitement, I told him what had happened. Grigori Ivanovitsch was secretly delighted at the occurrence and also by the knowledge that it was he himself who had coached me. However, he merely replied coldly, as was his wont: "Don't be too sure of yourself: perhaps Ibrahimov has judged too hastily. What you have to do now is to try to keep his good opinion, and to work still harder." Such a retort as this from anyone else might well have acted like a cold douche or a punch in the chest, and I should have been very far from appreciating such treatment -but now I understood Grigori Ivanovitsch well. He had written several letters to my mother in which he spoke very highly of me—though he never expressed the slightest satisfaction to me myself-and had even written to my mother requesting her not to shew me his letters to her. My attainments in Russian were equally belauded by my friend Ibrahimov: we were instructed in Russian syntax and set various themes which we had to write down from dictation, which consisted in transposing verse into prose. The dictation was of the greatest service to us, for it improved our spelling and our taste in letters at the same time, as Ibrahimov made it a practice to dictate the finest passages of Karamzin, Dmitriev, Lomonosov, and Cheraskov to us, explaining their literary beauties as he went along. According to his own personal opinion, syntax was of no earthly use or benefit; and it was merely in deference to the rules of the institution that he condescended to set us to study the same on a few rare occasions. Instead of syntax, he used to make us prepare little compositions on given subjects. As regards other branches of study. I was classed by Jakovkin not amongst the best, but amongst the good, scholars in universal history. Russian history, and geography. In languages my performances were poor on the whole, owing no doubt to the inferior capacity of my teachers. While in the Lower School I had been very weak in arithmetic, and it became evident on reaching the Middle School that I possessed no mathematical

ability. Not only at the Gymnasium—but later at the University—this proved true. I wrote, drew, and danced tolerably well. The priest considered me a fair scholar, but by no means one of his best. In the Middle School I ceased to drag my horrid slate and slate pencil about with me, both of which I loathed. The squeak of the pencil on the slate used to set my nerves all on edge (as it does to the present day).

At last we heard that Ivan Ipatovitsch and his young wife had returned to the city and were living in the same house as the bride's mother. The very next day he came to see his boarders and was very amiable with us all. Yevsevitsch afterwards told me privately that Grigori Ivanovitsch had been exceedingly angry with Ivan Ipatovitsch who, instead of one month, had stayed away three. He told him too that he (Grigori) had found it exceedingly tiresome to have to look after children, but he had not left them without any instruction or supervision, as Ivan Ipatovitsch had been accustomed to do. The latter confessed himself in the wrong, and thanked and embraced his colleague, but Grigori was exceedingly cross and uncivil, and threatened that if Ivan did not provide himself with a suitable house without any delay, he would leave at once, and not be troubled any longer with another man's boarders. It must be explained that Grigori Ivanovitsch no longer had any boarders of his own. In spite of these threats a good while elapsed before Ivan Ipatovitsch got his house; and Grigori Ivanovitsch was forced to remain with us two months longer. meanwhile looking carefully after our studies, our comfort, and our conduct. During these five months I grew much attached to Grigori Ivanovitsch, although he seldom spoke a kind word to me and always preserved the aspect of a cold and severe man. At that time it would have been impossible for me to realise the worth of such a tutor, and I certainly should have disliked him, had it not been for my mother privately informing me that he was really very fond of me and spoke very highly of my abilities; but I was not to know this, as he feared that I was too young to appreciate praise properly and might therefore be spoilt by it. Unfortunately Grigori Ivanovitsch stuck to his mistaken belief during the whole of his long, useful, and distinguished career, during which he not only came in contact with children, but frequently with

older folks. Those who had the opportunity of becoming intimate with him invariably contracted a feeling of life-long respect and even veneration for him; but there were many -and excellent people too-who were repulsed by the determined stiffness of his bearing and took him for a cold and haughty man, in which they were utterly mistaken. length Ivan Ipatovitsch settled in a suitable house of his own. When I was about to leave and was bidding adieu to Grigori Ivanovitsch, I burst out crying and tried to embrace him: this he would not permit and, although he was nearly moved to tears himself (as I gathered from a letter which he wrote to my mother) he spoke in a cold and distant tone to me, saying: "What does this mean? Why are you crying? Perhaps you are afraid that Ivan Ipatovitsch will be stricter with you now!" I must confess that these remarks wounded me very much at the time. I have forgotten to mention that Ivan Ipatovitsch had brought his voung wife to see us, but all we noticed was that she had no evebrows and was so nervous that she could not utter a single word, and only blushed furiously. I and the three Manaseins were put together in a separate wing of Ivan Ipatovitsch's house, and at first we were left entirely to our own devices. And now I began to remark the utter difference between the latter and Grigori Ivanovitsch. We only saw Ivan Ipatovitsch at dinner and supper. The young man was occupied exclusively with the consolidation of his new position in life and the management of his estate of Koschtschakovo, which included sixty serfs and was situated twenty versts from the city. This estate was part of his wife's dowry and he spent two days of each week there. The rest of his time was spent in teaching physical science in the Upper School at the Gymnasium; or in looking after his young wife's relatives, her three grown-up sisters having come to live with the young couple. No one paid the least attention to the housekeeping and everything was in a state of confusion; the food was very bad, and this eircumstance occasioned the following disaster. One evening at supper, we had some ham served (we all took supper together at one table in the big house); I had cut a morsel off my share, and was about to put it in my mouth when Yevseyitsch, who stood behind my chair, gave me a shove in the back; I turned

round and stared at him in surprise, but he shook his head and signed to me with his eves not to eat the ham: I put the piece back on the plate and then, for the first time observed that the ham was bad and actually full of maggots. I sent away my plate very hastily. I sat quite near to Ivan Ipatovitsch, and he had seen all that had passed. I must add that not only the boarders, but Ivan's mother-in-law, wife, and three sisters-in-law sat at table with us. After supper, when we went to say Good-night to Ivan Ipatovitsch, before going to bed he ordered me to remain behind and then conducted me and Vevsevitsch into his study. Once there, he rebuked me most severely for my impertinence, telling me that, desiring to insult my host. I had drawn the attention of all present to the rotten ham, which the others had eaten out of politeness. After Ivan Ipatovitsch had administered a long sermon to me and had proved that I had committed an unpardonable breach of good manners, he set to work to scold my worthy Yevseyitsch with great energy. I could not possibly conceive that I had done anything wrong and, feeling very much injured, began to cry. At this Ivan Ipatovitsch adopted a milder tone, said he would pardon me, and even tried to embrace me; but I told him very candidly that I was not crying because I was sorry for what I had done, but because he had insulted me in suspecting me of having intentionally offended and because he had abused my servant. This made Ivan Ipatovitsch angrier than ever: he discovered Heaven alone knows what sort of obduracy in my character: told me that I should receive exemplary punishment the next day; and ordered me off to bed. I lay awake for a long time that night. and the thought that a strange man was going to administer exemplary punishment to me, and for no fault on my part, irritated and mortified me excessively. Until now, no one, with the exception of my mother, had ever punished me; and it was long since she had done so. At last I fell asleep. Next day after we were dressed and had assembled in the big house to drink tea, Ivan Ipatovitsch came to us as usual, explained my crime to the three Manaseins and young Velagin 1, and ordered them off to the Gymnasium. As for

¹ This was Ivan Ipatovitsch's brother-in-law who a fortnight previously had been admitted to the Gymnasium and was one of his boarders.

me, I was deprived of my tea, told to remain at home, to hie me to the neighbouring wing of the building there to undress myself and get into bed, where I was to stay until evening. Instead of my breakfast and dinner I was to be regaled with a piece of bread and a glass of water. Such a humiliating and totally unmerited punishment was bound to appear an unbearable affront to a sensitive highly-strung boy like myself: and an affront it was in fact. I stared haughtily at this boardinghouse master and then, smiling contemptuously, hurried off to the boarders' quarters. There I undressed, got into bed, and began to read. My good Yevseyitsch, who could not realise how insulted I felt, laughed heartily over the silly punishment, but was very wroth at the thought of my going hungry and promised to bring me something good for my dinner on the sly. This I very angrily forbade him to do, and dismissed him. First of all I felt nothing but anger and indignation, then I began to cry, and finally I fell asleep! I had slept badly the night before, and now slept so soundly that I only awoke when my companions, who had had their dinner with the family in the adjacent house, came into our wing and began to play and shout. My long nap had calmed me: I sent away the bread and water, and listened to the jokes and jeers of my schoolfellows with perfect equanimity; the boys themselves knew I had done nothing wrong and were only amused at the absurdity of my punishment. The middle Manasein, an inveterate lazybones, professed to envy me even, and said he wished he might be punished in that way every day. When my companions quitted me to go to afternoon school at the Gymnasium, I busied myself with learning the tasks which they had been set that morning, and repeating over those we had learnt the evening before. At six o'clock in the evening, when the boarders had returned from the Gymnasium and were drinking tea in the dining room, Ivan Ipatovitsch sent word that I was to get dressed and join the party. I obeyed. He received me, remarking that I was forgiven; and I had to thank the ladies for this By the ladies he meant his abridgment of my punishment. mother-in-law, wife, and his sisters-in-law. I thanked all of them. Ivan Ipatovitsch and his wife were obliged to go off somewhere almost directly, and after tea my schoolfellows

went into their own part of the house. The ladies, however. detained me and hastily prepared a little table loaded with nice things. I was set down to it, and the young girls sat beside me, almost feeding me with their own hands, and even brought a glass of preserves, of which I was exceedingly fond. All this hospitality was accompanied by such caresses and fondling that my heart was quite won. I gathered that the young ladies, although so far they had not exchanged a single word with me, had taken a great fancy to me on account of my modest behaviour; and that my recent punishment which both they and their old mother considered very harsh and quite undeserved—had aroused their pity and sympathy to such a degree that they had done nothing but entreat Ivan Ipatovitsch to forgive me; and one sister, Katerina, had actually wept and gone down on her knees to Ivan. I observed that Katerina Petrovna grew exceedingly red. They kept me with them the whole evening and took the opportunity of enquiring all about my relations. Naturally I grew very talkative and told them all about my dear Aksakovo and about my first stay at the Gymnasium. Then I recited a number of poems from memory, always a favourite performance of mine. The young ladies were enchanted, professed themselves amazed at my talents, and overwhelmed me with caresses. For my part I was equally delighted with the good impression I had made, and my childish vanity made my head quite giddy. After supper I joined my schoolfellows in the outer wing again. 'The Yelagins' brother had already told them how his sisters had been fondling and praising me, and the other boys wanted to hear all about it and were very envious of my good fortune. At last I fell asleep worn out with excitement and my confused and fantastic thoughts.

I have dwelt upon every detail of this apparently insignificant occurrence, one of whose consequences was that I ceased to study with my former diligence. Old Madame Yelagina, as well as her daughters, had taken a great liking for me, and the old lady used frequently to ask her son-in-law's permission to invite me to spend the evening in the big house, where I used to enjoy myself very much for a couple of hours or so. On Sundays and feast-days I was continually at their house, and practically ceased going to see my father's relations,

Madame Kiryeieva and Madame Safonova, whom previously I had been very fond of visiting. My companions were very jealous of me and Yelagin, a fifteen-year-old lubberly lout. whose sisters would not allow him to make one of our little party, gave me very black looks and let some sinister hints fall which were totally incomprehensible to me. By degrees I began to entirely neglect my lessons; and although Ivan Ipatovitsch at the end of three months had engaged a young student to teach us, with whom I could have studied to my own great advantage, it so happened that I never worked at all until the spring, when the Yelagins returned to their country house. This student, who was a youth of the name of Guri Ivlitsch Lastotschkin, had just completed his courses of study at the Religious Seminary and was a very unpretentious and well-informed young man. At the Gymnasium I only retained my old position as an excellent scholar in Ibrahimov's class for Russian and Slavonic grammar, and this only because I was exceedingly fond of the teacher and the subject he taught. About six weeks before the examinations I began to work with the utmost zeal. Guri Ivlitsch grew very fond of me during this time and assisted me in my efforts to the utmost of his ability; but, in spite of all our pains. I was not promoted to the Upper School and remained another year in the Middle division. Only a third of the pupils were moved up, and many of these were promoted—not on on account of their scholastic attainments—but merely on account of their age, as they had been two-and some even three— years in the Middle School. No one thought any the less of me for being left in the Middle School; but although I heard everyone around me say that a two-years stay there would be of great service to me and that nearly every pupil had to work out those two years in the same way, still my youthful ambition was sadly damped, and, above all things, I dreaded lest my mother should be grieved. My anxiety was quite groundless. When I and Yevseyitsch arrived at Aksakovo for the summer holidays (in 1803) and my mother had read the letters which I brought from Upadyschevski, Ivan Ipatovitsch, and Grigori Ivanovitsch, both she and my father quite approved of my remaining in the Middle School. But when I began telling her in all innocence, and with the

I spent my time there, my mother grew very thoughtful and seemed very far from pleased. She disliked Ivan Ipatovitsch and the whole of his family, including even poor Guri Ivlitsch Lastotschkin, as she could not endure seminarists, in which last opinion my father heartily concurred. This prejudice was especially unfair in the case of Guri Ivlitsch, who possessed many very good qualities.¹ But what angered and provoked my

1 Some years later I was fated to meet Guri Ivlitsch Lastotschkin, once more, under somewhat curious circumstances. I must explain that at the end of the school quarter, as I have already told you, he grew quite fond of me, and in spite of the disparity in our ages—I being twelve and he two-and-twenty—he used to confide in me and tell me all about his family affairs. Among other things he told me that the heads of the Seminary were urging him to enter the priesthood, for which calling he felt not the slightest inclination. I do not know how I got the idea fixed in my head that Guri Ivlitsch would inevitably become a priest; but it was there, and I told him of it. He stoutly maintained that this would never happen, and even grew cross about it; and in order to convince me of the contrary, he once took a sheet of paper and wrote upon it: "The Kazanka shall flow up-hill before Guri Lastotschkin becomes a priest." He then confided the paper to my keeping, as a sort of bond or testimony that he intended to preserve his freedom; a plain proof that he was extremely juvenile at the time. Two months later we separated. Three or four years passed, I had heard nothing of Guri Ivlitsch meanwhile and had quite forgotten his existence. One dismal autumn morning I received a note from my much loved aunt N. N. Subova; she then was living with the V.....vs, where I frequently went to see her. "My dear Sergei," she wrote, "Come to us at five o'clock this afternoon. You must wear your student's uniform and sword, for we are having a wedding at our house to-day, and you are to be Lisa's wedding-marshal, and put on her shoes, and take her to church." Lisa was the adopted daughter of the V.....vs, a poor young girl of great beauty, I arrived rather late, was scolded, and immediately sent to the bride's room, where I drew on her silk stockings and shoes. The bride was not fully dressed, only her hair and headdress were in full bridal trim; I recollect that her beauty dazzled me. I barely had time to exchange a couple of words with my dear aunt in her own room than I was summoned to go and see the mistress of the house, Madame V.....va, who begged me to take her carriage and drive as quickly as possible to the bridegroom and tell him that the bride was dressed, and he must set off to the church at once and send his marshal from thence to say that he was awaiting his bride. In the hurry of the moment, I had no time to enquire who the bridegroom was; so I dashed off on my errand at once. One of the V.....vs' servants who was acquainted with the bridegroom and who knew where he lived accompanied me. I was driven to a large stone-built house, and conducted through several rooms, until the man opened a door and said: "That's the bridegroom, looking at himself in the glass." I saw the back view of a vigorous man, arrayed in knee breeches, silk stockings, and shoes. Someone was tying a broad, white cravat round his throat. I made a step forward, and the man turned round. It was Guri Ivlitsch Lastotschkin, who had grown very stout and strong. We each uttered

mother more than anything else was the idiotic punishment which Ivan Ipatovitsch had thought fit to inflict upon me. The desire to remove me from his guardianship and restore me to the care of Grigori Ivanovitsch grew stronger in her heart. To remove me was not a difficult matter, but to induce Grigori Ivanovitsch to forego his carefully-arranged plans seemed well-nigh impossible, all the more so because he was not only a colleague of Ivan Ipatovitsch, but his intimate friend.

It might damage him in the eyes of other parents, if his best pupil left him; and, were I to go direct from him to Grigori Ivanovitsch, those who were ignorant of the real circumstances would suspect the latter of having acted disloyally towards his friend. My poor mother was very much worried and at a loss how to act for the best. The attentions of the Yelagin ladies, and especially the affectionate attitude of a certain one of them, annoyed her dreadfully; which astonished me not a little. She determined that she would go to Kazan herself the next winter, as soon as the roads were passable: first, to see for herself how I spent my time; and secondly to exert her utmost efforts to persuade Grigori Ivanovitsch to accept me as his boarder. There was a third reason which I only heard later; my mother wished me to spend the winter

an exclamation of astonishment. "Ah, my dear Aksakov!" said he, "How rejoiced I am to see you again; but you must excuse me . . . just for the moment I cannot . . ." Here I interrupted him to say that I was the bride's marshal and had come to tell him to make haste. While Lastotschkin hurried on with his toilet, we talked together. "It appears to me you are somewhat surprised," he remarked. "Yes," I replied, "I never guessed that you were the happy man, but I am only too delighted that you have got such a good and beautiful girl for your wife." "Ah, I see you have heard nothing!" exclaimed Lastotschkin, as he seized my hand; and, leading me aside, said in a low tone: "You have perhaps not forgotten my written vow never to enter the priesthood? Very well, now listen to what I have to tell you. To-morrow I am to be ordained, and the day after I am installed as the first Vicar of the St. Peter and Paul Church!" As he spoke, tears started to his eyes. Of the circumstances which led Guri Ivlitsch to change his mind, or which, mayhap, forced him to sacrifice his former opinion, I know nothing whatever; but it was pretty evident that the loss of his freedom had cost him not a little sorrow. I have never seen him since, but now and again, during the course of fifty years, I have heard that Guri Ivlitsch Lastotschkin's lofty character endeared him as much to all who knew him as his mental gifts caused them to respect and honour him. I believe he actually was appointed Rector of the recently founded Theological Academy at Kazam.

vacation with her, and not to be associated in any way with Madame Ivan Ipatovitsch or her family either.

My summer holidays were spent as delightfully as before in the country: but I went through an experience on my return journey to Kazan which made the profoundest impression upon me—the recollection of which impression has not vanished even to-day. After that time my horror at crossing a great river was increased tenfold, and to-day I have an excessive fear of deep water. The event to which I refer happened thus: one noon we arrived at the summer ferry-station on the Kama, just opposite the village of Schuran. Three heavily-laden peasants' carts with their drivers, and some fifteen women carrying baskets of berries, were collected together on the bank, waiting to cross. The women were returning on foot to their homes on the farther side of the Kama. There were none of the regular ferrymen at the station, and I cannot account in any way for their absence. After the peasants and my servants had discussed the situation awhile, they decided to make the passage across the river, as one of the peasants warranted himself fully able to handle the rudder. assuring us that he had been a ferryman for many years. Thereupon the best ferry-boat was selected, and the three carts and horses, as well as my travelling carriage and span of three horses, were all got safely on board; all the women and berry-baskets boarded the vessel; the self-styled "ferryman" took the helm; two peasants, my coachman, and our young servant, Ivan Borisov, a strong fellow, who was worth more than any ten ordinary men put together, set themselves to row; and we put off from the shore. Meanwhile black stormclouds had been gathering in the West and had gradually obscured the entire horizon; we hoped however that they would pass off in a sideways direction or, at any rate, not burst until we had got safely across. Our starting-point was exactly opposite Schuran; but in order to avoid being driven too far down by the rapid current of the sinister Kama and in order to touch the landing place exactly, we had to tack for more than a verst by means of poling. This was a very slow business, and the thunderstorm was approaching rapidly.

In order to shorten the journey, our folks only tacked for about half a verst, then resumed their oars and, after crossing themselves, took an oblique course across the river, rowing against the current. Scarcely had we gained the middle of the stream, however, than the thunder clouds spread over the whole firmament with incredible rapidity: the black sky was reflected in the still blacker water: darkness enveloped us. and a frightful storm with thunder, lightning, and sudden raging wind, broke over us. Our helmsman quitted the helm in a fright and confessed that he had never been a ferryman and knew nothing about steering; the whirlwind spun our boat round and round like a wood shaving; the women all started velling at once; and terror seized all on board. I was so frightened that I could not utter a syllable and trembled in every limb. Between the whirlwind and the rushing current our craft was carried several versts downstream and at last struck a sandbank, most fortunately situated only about fifty fathoms from the opposite shore. Ivan Borisov jumped into the water, which was waist-deep, and succeeded in discovering a ford leading to the bank, the water never rising higher than his chest. He retraced his passage to the ferry-boat and, selecting the quietest of our horses, seated me on the animal's back, telling me to hold fast to its mane and neck, and then led it by the bridle towards the bank. Yevseyitsch walked behind, supporting me with both hands. The heaving, boisterous waves dashed around us, and their combing crests broke over us. Unluckily, Borisov, who was leading us, lost track of the ford and conducted us into a deeper part of the stream. There he disappeared under water, my horse began to swim, and Yevseyitsch was left behind. Believing myself confronted with death. I experienced a terror which I shall never forget as long as I live: each moment I thought I was going to faint, and I was nearly suffocated. Happily, the deep part was not more than two or three fathoms in length. Borisov was a splendid swimmer, my steed likewise swam gallantly, and, without letting go of the reins, Borisov swam direct to a shallow spot and led my horse safely up the bank. Poor Yevseyitsch, who was not much of a swimmer, was nearly drowned, and only

gained the shore with the utmost difficulty. I had not a dry thread upon me and was lifted, almost unconscious, from the horse's back: my fingers which had clutched his mane were quite stiff and rigid with cold. However I very soon revived and was inexpressibly thankful for my deliverance. Yevseyitsch remained with me, but Borisov returned to the ferryboat where he assisted the women (who were shrieking and howling, but who stoutly refused to part with their baskets of berries) to enter the water. The men got the carts and horses out of the boat, and at last all succeeded in gaining the shore by a somewhat shallower ford which they had the good fortune to strike. The ferry-boat, lightened of the greater part of her burden, floated again and began to move down-stream. And now Ivan Borisov's great strength proved itself of service, for he held the boat fast until our coachman had brought our remaining pair of horses and the carriage off it and had landed them on the sandbank; then the boat was released and off she floated immediately on the current. Standing in water up to their belts, the two men harnessed the horses and the carriage was dragged to the bank, with everything it contained wet through and through. The wet and shivering party took their places in it and we set out for Schuran, where we warmed ourselves, dried our clothes, had some good hot tea to drink, and were little the worse for our cold bath. All the same, the fright had such an effect upon my mind and constitution that I have never since been able to contemplate any large body of water with composure—even when the weather is calm; while a storm causes me an involuntary feeling of alarm which I am unable to control.

Once back at the Gymnasium, I applied myself diligently to my studies. The Yelagin family were still absent in the country and there was nothing to divert my attention. Guri Ivlitsch, delighted with my industry, assisted me to the very best of his ability, and very soon I was reckoned amongst the very best pupils in the Middle School in every subject except mathematics. I need not say anything farther about Ibrahimov's class, as I always held the highest position there. By this time I had grown very much attached to the Gymnasium, the tutors, the Inspectors, and my jolly companions. The constant bustle and hurry, the mingled sounds of

many voices, the frequent laughter and shouting, had long since ceased to agitate me. I never even noticed it. I joined in the general chorus, which now echoed pleasantly in my ears. . . . The autumn was a long drawn-out season and very rainy. There was a serious outbreak of fever in the city and I caught the infection. Dr. Benis was no longer physician at the Gymnasium, so our old friend. Andrei Ivanovitsch Ritter attended all the pupils, including the senior-pensioners and the paying-pupils, myself being among these last. He succeeded in reducing the fever very successfully at first, but it returned after the expiration of a few days. Enormous doses of powdered quinine combined with Glauber's Salts—the memory of which fills me with disgust to the present daybanished the fever a second time, but a fortnight later it began again worse than ever, and thus the condition of things went on for some time. Yevsevitsch, who saw that the remedies were quite ineffectual, began to have grave doubts of the doctor's ability, knowing the latter of old as a man of pleasure. Moreover, having ascertained that he frequently visited and prescribed for me while in an intoxicated condition—Yevseyitsch, as I say, ventured to inform Ivan Ipatovitsch of all that was happening and to beg him to engage another medical man for me. However Ivan Ipatovitsch flew into a rage, told my servant that Dr. Ritter was highly respected by everyone in the town, that he was quite capable of curing a case of fever, and sent my guardian about his business. But Yevseyitsch, who was deeply attached to me, bethought himself of my mother's orders and wrote to her informing her of my illness. My mother, although not yet fully recovered from the effects of her accouchement (our family circle having lately been increased by the addition of a third brother) was in a great state of alarm and agitation, and immediately quitted home for Kazan, where she took a house, sent for me, called in the best physician in the city, and herself superintended the case. This journey to Kazan was a farther act of self-sacrifice on her part and her health was permanently injured in consequence her whole life was a series of similar unselfish acts! My removal from his house was not effected without a good deal of very unpleasant parleying and explanation with Ivan Ipatovitsch, who con-

sidered himself highly insulted because my mother should have thought fit to take me into her own house, and had consulted another doctor. During the whole period of my cure, which lasted some two months, (as I had severe pains in my left side), a far-from-agreeable rencontre took place between Ivan Ipatovitsch and the parents of the Manaseins, which resulted in the former giving up his pensionnat, and declaring that in future he would accept no more boarders. This occurrence was a source of extreme satisfaction to my mother. In any case she had no intention of permitting me to return to Ivan Ipatovitsch; but then it would have been next-toimpossible to persuade Grigori Ivanovitsch to take me direct from his friend's charge. Even now she had to contend with so much opposition that for a long time the issue hung in the balance. It must be noted that, during the whole of my second period at the Gymnasium, the friendly feeling of Grigori Ivanovitsch for my family never wavered, but grew stronger as time went on. My mother and he carried on a brisk correspondence, and he knew not which to admire and value most —her intellect, her devoted maternal love, or the sincere and unaffected friendship which she felt for himself, which was the outcome of the deep respect his strict moral principles had inspired in her. Frequently, from the adjacent bed-chamber. I have heard my mother's earnest and tearful entreaties, as she besought Grigori Ivanovitsch to accept me as his pupil. At last he yielded to her importunity, but with a very bad grace. He would not have me as a boarder, only as his young companion, although at that time he was twentysix years old and I but thirteen. But nothing would induce him to accept any payment: he suggested that the rent and housekeeping expenses should be equally divided between us, and that for greater convenience I should provide my own tea: all disbursements were to be paid by the person for whom any purchases were made. When my mother had attained the fulfilment of this long-desired and cherished desire, she was so overjoyed and in such high spirits that, deep in my heart, I had the conviction that nothing in the wide world can be found to equal the love of a mother. For my own part, I was charmed at the prospect of living with Grigori Ivanovitsch. I regarded him with the utmost awe and veneration, mingled

with sincere affection; his somewhat peculiar and distant manner did not chill me, as I perfectly comprehended that his outward bearing was merely the outcome of his pedantic views as to the right way of dealing with young folks. In those days I quite believed that such methods were suitable, an opinion which I have totally changed since then.

We immediately installed ourselves in a very pleasant and spacious house, which was the Yelagins' property, but which they preferred to let just then. My mother and I were the first to occupy it, as she arranged all our future household affairs for us; she then committed me-fully restored to health -to the care of my tutor, Grigori Ivanovitsch, and returned to her family at Aksakovo, her heart full of the highest hope. This was in February, 1804. I have no happier recollections of my early youth than those of my life with Grigori Ivanovitsch. This lasted for a period of two-and-a-half years: and although, towards the end of the time, its clear lustre was somewhat dimmed, only the happy times and scenes stand out bright and clear in my grateful memory. It would seem as if Grigori Ivanovitsch had refused to accept the charge of me so stoutly, merely in order to devote himself more entirely to me when once he had been persuaded to take me. My education at the Gymnasium, although I studied there with the utmost application, became a matter of quite secondary importance: the great thing was my home-work. I only went to certain tutors regularly; very rarely taking lessons in mathematics, drawing and script-writing; and during the school hours allotted to these last three subjects, I was at home, working under the supervision of my judicious tutor. Curious that mathematics absolutely refused to remain in my head! Just at first, Grigori Ivanovitsch instructed me most zealously in this subject, and I cannot deny but that I quite understood his extraordinarily clear and lucid explanations: but I forgot everything I had learnt a few minutes later, and Grigori naturally concluded that I never had actually understood it. As he knew that I was great friends with Alexander Knäschevitsch, who was very clever at mathematics, he asked this latter, by way of trial, to study mathematics with me; and, will it be believed! I understood Knäschvitsch's expounding a great deal better than Grigori's,

and kept it much longer in my memory! But after all, it led to nothing: in a few days everything mathematical had vanished. My otherwise excellent memory was like a sheet of clean, white paper, on which no figures or calculations would remain! So my tutor drew up a plan of education for me founded upon my natural inclinations and abilities, whose general characteristics were of a literary type. He ordered a number of books for me. As far as I can recollect, they included the following: the works of Lomonosov, Derschavin,1 Dimitriev, Kapnist, and Chemnitzer: Sumarokov and Cheraskov I possessed already; but Grigori Ivanovitsch never read either of these two last with me. In French literature he ordered the sermons of Massillon, Fléchier, and Bourdaloue: in addition, there were the stories of Scheherazade (Arabian Nights' Entertainment), Don Quixote, the Death of Abel, Gessner's Idvlls. The Vicar of Wakefield, and two books on Natural History, one of which was illustrated: but the names of whose authors I cannot recollect. The study of natural history became one of my most absorbing interests. These are all the books which I can recollect by name, but there were many others. My tutor was especially anxious that I should learn foreign languages, French in particular, in which tongue I-like most scholars-was very backward. In three months I could read fluently and could understand any French book. The usual study of vocabularies, rules of grammar, and short sentences, went on its tranquil way at school, but at home I learnt nothing by heart. Grigori Ivanovitsch would select a book, tell me to read it, and translate orally as I went along. At first I understood practically nothing and found it very tiresome and stupid; but my teacher stuck obstinately to his method and its swift effect filled me with surprise and satisfaction. I made especial notes of words which I did not understand, next I wrote a translation (which was always repeated over twice by word of mouth) on a sheet of paper. Thanks to my good memory, the next day I was able to repeat the French original as well as the Russian translation and the

¹ A volume of Odes by Derschavin had just been published then, and a little book of Anacreontic poems; this latter was printed in "Petrograd," as the title page bore witness. Probably the foreign-sounding name of the new Russian capital was not much to Derschavin's taste.

especially-noted-down words, by heart—and this without setting to work to study it as a lesson. The first piece that I read and translated thus was an extract from a French book of selections, and was called Les Aventures d'Aristonoy. Directly after this I began to read and translate the Scheherazade, and then Don Quixote. I was forbidden to read a good many passages of these, a command which I conscientiously obeyed. Heavens! what a delight it was to study from these charming and enchanting works! Even now, separated from those days by a gulf of fifty years, I recall those lessons with a feeling of intense enjoyment and can well remember with what impatience I used to await their appointed hour, which was usually directly after we had finished dinner!

Grigori Ivanovitsch busied himself very earnestly with his own studies: he was hard at work preparing a special textbook on pure mathematics, to be used in the Gymnasium, compiled from the works of various celebrated mathematicians. He read a great many German authors, especially works on philosophy, and continually laboured to improve his Latin. Reading the Arabian Nights and Don Ouixote with me was a real recreation for him after his mental exertions; and he laughed as heartily over this literature as if he had been no older than myself, or, more justly speaking, like the veriest child; which at first astonished me greatly. At such times I could hardly recognise my sedate tutor; his stiffness and severity vanished utterly and I came to love him as an elder brother, although I always remained somewhat in awe of him. But as soon as I had made good progress in French literature, we made the reading of Russian authors—especially Russian poets—our principal study. Here Grigori Ivanovitsch explained the poetical beauty, the author's meaning, and the value of certain passages with such masterly detail and clarity that my budding inclination for literature very quickly developed into a passionate devotion. It cost me little or no effort to learn many of the best poems of Derschavin, Lomonosov, and Kapnist, by heart, all of which were selected for me by my

¹ Grigori Ivanovitsch had an especial gift for foreign languages and wrote them perfectly. His knowledge of Latin astonished everyone at the Vilna University, where he later became Curator. It is marvellous where and how he acquired such perfection in languages.

strict Mentor. As for the poems of Dmitriev (at that time considered a model of purity and perfection of style) I knew them all. We read very little Russian prose, most probably because my tutor had but scant sympathy with the prose writers of the day. It is worthy of notice that, with exception of certain of the Letters of a Russian Traveller,1 he never read Karamzin with me, and would not permit me to include My Bagatelles in my library. As it happened, I had already read all Karamzin's works; knew Hector's Farewell to Andromache and the Practical Wisdom of Solomon by heart, and used to recite these poems with great fervour. I wanted to show off with these before my tutor, but he only scowled and said the former poem gave no just conception whatever of Homer, any more than the latter of Ecclesiastes; adding that Karamzin was no poet and I should do better to forget all his poetry. This astonished me considerably. Both of these poems charmed me, and I continued to recite them for my own delight, notably when I was alone in the garden. My tutor would not allow me to write essays, either; but in spite of him I used to refresh myself with this pleasant occupation in Ibrahimov's class or, at home, on the sly. I once overheard a conversation between Grigori Ivanovitsch and Ibrahimov. on the subject of myself. I was in my room, which was only divided by a thin door from the room which served Grigori as study and bed-chamber alike. Ibrahimov was speaking of me in most flattering terms, and shewed my tutor one of my school essays "On the Beauty of Springtime," which was written in the form of a letter from one friend to another. He added that I ought to be encouraged to write essays. Grigori Ivanovitsch, who invariably took an exactly opposite view to that of his colleague, replied in very decided tones: "All this stuff is mere sham, my dear fellow! These essays are only strings of detached phrases that have been picked up, here and there, out of the books the boy reads; and consequently it is impossible to judge whether he has any real literary gift or

¹ Karamzin, Nicholas Michailovitsch (1765-1826). Russian Historian of Tartar descent. The *Letters* were first published in *The Moscow Journal* of which Karamzin was Editor, and described his travels through Europe, when he visited Germany, Switzerland, France, and England. An English translation (1803) of these *Letters* is in existence. [Tr.]

not. Of course he is very fond of reading, and I am aware that he has already begun to scribble; but I must keep a firm hand on the reins, and the later my Telemachus¹ begins to write compositions of his own, the better for himself. A young man must study the best originals in order to cultivate his own taste, and must read authors with a graceful and correct style. Do you suppose I permitted him to read the whole of Derschavin? Certainly not. He knows about twenty of his poems—not more, but he has the whole of Dimitriev by heart. I suspect you're spoiling him for me. Probably you are treating your class to Poor Lisa, Natalia, the Boyar's Daughter, and that little dramatic piece, Sofia. Ibrahimov was quite affronted, and retorted that he was perfectly well aware that these works, in spite of their beauty, were not fit for school boys to read. "All right," replied my tutor, "but our good friend Erich² has these very pieces set for translation into French." The conversation continued a while longer, and, young as I was, I recognised the value of my tutor's opinion. He was quite unaware of my being at home, which accounted for his speaking out so freely about me. As it happened I had returned unexpectedly early from the Gymnasium, where our class-teacher had failed to turn up, and had gone straight to my room without anyone noticing me. On this occasion I heard Grigori Ivanovitsch express his extreme admiration and regard for my mother; but, alas, he never spoke a single flattering word about myself, and with what delight should I have listened to anything of the sort! He really might have known that I was listening at the keyhole! The whole affair was most puzzling and baffling! Even now, when I recall the past, I cannot offer any explanation of my extreme attachment to Grigori Ivanovitsch. In consequence of my youth I was unable fully to penetrate the austere bearing which concealed the deep interest and the hearty good will which he had for myself. He never caressed me, never flattered

¹ This was the name by which I was known to all Grigori Ivanovitsch's colleagues; who likewise jokingly bestowed the title of Mentor upon my tutor.

² Erich was a famous linguist, who understood a great number of languages, both living and dead. He taught in the Upper School at the Gymnasium, taking the French and German classes, and was made Assistant Professor of Latin and Greek at the University.

my vanity by a syllable of praise, nor even encouraged my industry; and, in spite of all his coldness, I loved him better than anyone outside of my own family. I recollect that I once heard him laugh outright. I peeped into his room, and there saw my solemn tutor, a book of mathematics in his hand, laughing like a child at the gambols of a pair of playful kittens. Just at that moment his face was so pleasant, attractive, and kind, that I positively envied those kittens. I went up to him to give him my exercises, and his countenance instantly reassumed its usual cold mask, he even gave me a look of actual dislike.

So ran the world away. From time to time Grigori Ivanovitsch was a little bit more affable, and his mood, if not precisely friendly, was at least slightly jocose; but this was only when we were tête-à-tête, for instance we might be reading *Don Quixote*, where Sancho Panza was an inexhaustible source of merriment. But let a third person appear—even were it only Yevseyitsch—and my tutor would instantly freeze again.

Grigori Ivanovitsch was the son of a Little Russian noble. a priest who possessed some hundred or so serfs; his greatgrandfather was a Turk who, for some reason or other which I never understood, quitted Turkey, embraced Christianity, married, and settled in Little Russia. Grigori Ivanovitsch never knew a mother's love, but his father loved his boy with maternal tenderness. As he saw that his son was unhappy at home, the father took him to Moscow when he was nine years old and procured him a nomination as a State Alumnus in the University Gymnasium. The son loved his father with the most passionate devotion and grieved sadly when he was left alone in Moscow; a year later his father came to visit him there, and the boy was in such a state of delight that the excitement brought on a fever: the poor father was unable to remain long in Moscow and was forced to return home leaving his beloved child ill in bed. At the end of a year the father died. During the course of eighteen years, dating from his first entry into the Moscow Gymnasium, Grigori Ivanovitsch had only re-visited Little Russia on one solitary occasion, and that was before he became a tutor; but he had retained a very unhappy and painful impression of his home. All this was told me by his servant, a Little Russian, one

Yaschka, whom he had brought away with him. There was not the slightest trace of a Little Russian origin in my tutor's accent, exterior, or way of looking at things. He always acted as if his native land had no charms whatever for him; and I have frequently heard him extol the superiority of the Greater Russian character at the expense of the laziness and stupidity of the Little Russian, to the great wrath of his compatriots—Ivan Ipatovitsch, and Markevitsch, the latter our steward at the Gymnasium, a very worthy man, with a quite respectable *corporation*, a born humorist, and very amusing in his way. He was always very kind to me, and I liked him exceedingly.

It was now the Spring of 1804, and during Passion Week Grigori Ivanovitsch and I prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament; the former being a most strict observer of all fasts and suchlike spiritual ceremonies. Our own parish church, dedicated to the holy martyr Saint Varvara, stood exactly opposite the turnpike, behind the so-called Arskoie-Field. Although the roads were in a frightful state owing to the time of the year, we attended every service at this church, even the early mass. Just about this time Ivan Ipatovitsch paid us a visit, and I accidentally overheard him sharpening his wits over Grigori Ivanovitsch's piety. I gathered from what he said that, once upon a time, my tutor had by no means been such a zealous observer of religious ordinances as he was at present; but now the latter rebuked his friend very sternly for his ill-timed merriment, causing Ivan Ipatovitsch, who considered himself in the light of a philosopher, great offence, with the result that for a long time he never came near the house. I may here remark that Grigori Ivanovitsch was a true Christian throughout his whole life. Notwithstanding his little quarrel with Ivan Ipativitsch, my tutor and I spent some time at the latter's estate, where we both had a very happy time during the proprietor's absence in Koschtschakovo; we lived in a little hut on the margin of a big pond, which was just free from its winter's ice; we used to read a great deal, and took a walk twice a day in spite of the mud. The joy of spring took possession of me and reminded me of bygone springs at Aksakovo. The cry of the arriving birds of passage roused the heart of the future sportsman. Once-while seated

at the open window with Grigori Ivanovitsch, who was endeayouring to explain some abstruse passage in the very serious-minded French book which we were studying together. and which was not quite clear to me-the melodious whistle of a red-legged snipe was suddenly heard; and the bird popped down from the sky and, with its long red legs outstretched behind it, took its flight to the bank of the pond. where it alighted directly opposite the window. I started, the book fell from my hand, and I rushed to the window. My tutor was petrified with astonishment. Almost breathless I exclaimed: "A snipe, a red-legged snipe, is perched on the bank, close by: there she goes " But Grigori Ivanovitsch had no sympathy with a hunter's feelings, and very gruffly ordered me to come back to my place and continue my lesson. I obeyed, and although I could not see the snipe I heard her pipe: the blood rushed to my face and I could not understand another word in the book. My tutor in very severe tones ordered me to put it down, and then told me to make a fair copy of the exercises which he had just corrected in my book: he himself continued to read. At the end of an hour he remarked: "Well? Has the snipe flown out of your head yet?" I replied in the affirmative and we resumed our interrupted study. I may here remark that Grigori Ivanovitsch was very indulgent in this way; did he observe that I was tired, or that my attention was in any way diverted from my task, he would always bid me go and play in the garden or occupy myself with some mechanical work or other

Now came June and the time of the examinations. In every one of my classes in the Middle School, I was placed on the list of excellent scholars; but, as there were some subjects which I did not study at all, I received no prize: this circumstance however in no way hindered my transference to the Upper School. Only nine pupils—those who had finished the Upper School course—left the Gymnasium; all the others were to remain in the Upper School for another year.

The travelling carriage, with its three horses, had already arrived to take me home. I and Yevseyitsch prepared for the journey, and our departure was timed to take place after dinner on Speech Day, which was held at the beginning of July.

Some days before, Grigori Ivanovitsch had observed that he would like to accompany me part of the way, and asked if that would be agreeable to me. I replied that I should be delighted if he would do so. I believed that he only intended to go just beyond the city. But during the forenoon of the next day Yevseyitsch whispered to me: "Grigori Ivanovitsch is going to Aksakovo with us; but he has given us all orders that you are to know nothing about it." Now although I was exceedingly fond of my studies, this information was not particularly agreeable to me, as I was hoping to spend my holidays in fishing and shooting. Last year my father had promised me a gun and had said he would teach me to shoot. I knew very well that Grigori Ivanovitsch would by no means consent to my curtailing my lessons, and that I should have to give up a great deal of my time to them; in addition to all this, I was very much annoyed at his secrecy in the matter. Yevsevitsch shared my vexation for the same reasons. After the breaking-up ceremony we had our dinner served somewhat earlier than usual, and then set off on our journey. I behaved exactly as if I knew nothing of Grigori Ivanovitsch's intention. After passing the turnpike-gate we alighted and walked together for part of the way. My tutor appeared to be in a very good humour, and actually in high spirits; he was delighted with the aspect of the green fields and forests and the little cloudlets in the summer sky. After a while he remarked with a smile: "The weather is so charming. I think I will go with you as far as your first bivouac—as far as Myoscha: just to see how you amuse yourself with fishing." I replied -as if I knew nothing-"Then had not we better get into the carriage, and drive quickly so as to reach Myoscha as soon as possible? But how do you propose to get back?" "I can sleep with you in the carriage and take a peasant's cart home again," answered Grigori Ivanovitsch, looking fixedly at me. We climbed back into the coach and proceeded at a smart trot. It was a lovely and enchanting evening; we had our fishing tackle with us, and I and Yevseyitsch caught a considerable number of fish in the Myoscha, which we ate either boiled or grilled. After supper we lav down to sleep in the carriage. Awaking the next morning, I found we were on the move; the sun was already high in the heavens, and Grigori Ivanovitsch

was seated smiling at my side. I began to laugh myself, and confessed that I had known of his little plan for some time. He reproved Yevseyitsch mildly for his garrulity, and, observing from my expression that I was not exactly pleased. made haste to add: "I see you are afraid that I shall be a check on your holiday amusements; but there's no need for any alarm! I shall only ask you to study when you feel inclined to do so yourself. Now, as we have nothing better to do, suppose we read a little." So saying, he took a book out of the carriage pocket. My mind was quite set at ease by his explanation, and I should have liked—had I dared to venture on such a proceeding—to throw my arms round his neck. We drove along, studying together as we went, and in addition I repeated all that I knew by heart. We were far less constrained and more at ease with each other than ever we had been in Kazan: and to crown all wherever there was an opportunity to fish. I fished to my heart's content. Travelling thus, we reached Aksakovo on the fifth day. Grigori Ivanovitsch's arrival was an overwhelmingly delightful surprise for my mother, who was absolutely enraptured to see him.

Contrary to all expectation we found the house in a state of upset and bustle: my Aunt, Yevgenia Stepanovna, was about to get married and the wedding was fixed to take place in a few days. At this time Yevgenia Stepanovna was already forty years old; but she was of a blooming and very youthful appearance; she had found it very irksome to be compelled to reside in her sister-in-law's house-in actual dependence upon that woman who in earlier times had been fated to endure much humiliation at the hands of her husband's sisters—not excepting Yevgenia herself—although. to do this last justice, she had been much better than the others. Yevgenia Stepanovna's one ambition was to have a little house of her own in her old age, one special little nook where she alone would be mistress. She was marrying Vasili Vasilvevitsch Uglitschinin, who had been a soldier all his life; and who, shortly before this, had retired on his pension of a lieutenant-colonel. He was a very simple-minded, goodnatured, placid, and honourable, man, over fifty years of age. He was very poor, having no income beyond his pension. He came of an impoverished but noble family who had emigrated

to the Government of Ufa. He had begun his military career when only fourteen, and had served his country faithfully and loyally, although nearly always in a state of want and poverty. He had taken part in several battles, and had received various slight wounds: he had not a single decoration or sign of distinction to shew, although one might have supposed that his long and worthy service entitled him to every possible military medal or decoration. Latterly he had served in the Caucasus; and a little sum of money, saved from his scanty pay, a uniform minus epaulettes, a mountainbred pony—white with age, rheumatism in every joint of his body, and a cataract in his right eye-constituted the whole of his gratuity. Luckily for him the cataract was not very noticeable and Vasili Vasilyevitsch did his best to conceal it. as he was afraid that no girl would be willing to wed a oneeved man. Yevgenia Stepanovna owned a small village. together with twenty-five serfs, situated about seven versts from her sister's, Alexandra Stepanovna, property. There was a little bit of a house in this village, formed by throwing a couple of peasants' huts into one, which was built just at the source of the Bavla—a streamlet swarming with trout (a bewitching spot!) and which was surrounded by a fair number of capital fields and serviceable farm buildings. This little estate had been purchased for my aunt, at a very low price, from the Bashkirs. The purchase had been effected through her brother-in-law Ivan Petrovitsch Krotkov, who himself was of Bashkir descent on one side.1 This humble spot appeared the veriest haven of peace to the retired officer—a home where daily bread would be assured him in his old age.

Everybody was making merry on the sly at the expense of the poor old one-eyed bridegroom, with the exception of my mother, my father, and my tutor, Grigori Ivanovitsch, who all treated him with the utmost respect and civility. There was no lack of evil tongues who attributed my mother's friendliness to the fact that she was only too pleased to be rid of the burden of her sister-in-law. This was quite untrue:

¹ Unhappily this little estate was forfeited after a long lawsuit brought by a neighbouring tribe of Bashkirs, who established their claim as the just possessors of the land. My poor aunt was obliged to buy nine hundred dessyatins of land in the neighbourhood, and had to transfer the village and her own dwelling house to the new property.

my mother knew how to value and respect simple and inoffensive folk; she had unhesitatingly urged Yevgenia Stepanovna to marry a man, of whose intrinsic worth she herself was convinced, and, to the end of her days, her sister-in-law had reason to be grateful for this counsel. Grigori Ivanovitsch took an especial pleasure in conversing with the superannuated soldier: and Vasili Vasilyevitsch, who was inclined to be very reticent with strangers, answered all his enquiries quite candidly and told him a great many interesting anecdotes. My tutor inspired me with sympathy and respect for this man, by pointing out all those excellent qualities which I, in my vouth and ignorance, would have passed over and have failed to appreciate. . . . There was no accommodation for any men in the house; there had been considerable difficulty in finding room even for the ladies, as three rooms had been set apart for the exclusive use of the future bride and bridegroom. This caused my mother much perplexity; but at length she contrived an artful trick (for which her male relatives never forgave her). She gave up her own room, whose threshold hitherto had never been even crossed by a stranger, to Grigori Ivanovitsch, and quartered me with him; naturally on the understanding that this arrangement was only to hold good until the visitors had taken their leave. The wedding duly took place on the appointed day. My father escorted the "young" couple to their future home, returning immediately to Aksakovo. And at last our family circle was left to itself.

Here permit me to break off my narrative and hasten a little in advance. The life led by the Uglitschinin couple stands out so vividly before my eyes that I must spare a few words to describe it. Yevgenia Stepanovna had never known indigence or want during her maidenhood, as she had always lived with her parents, and, latterly, in the house of her brother and sister-in-law: now, as a married woman, she was to know the meaning of poverty for the first time and still she was supremely happy! She had a genuine tender affection for her poor old colonel, who returned her affection with equal devotion. It is a pity they had no children. Even in extreme old age Yevgenia Stepanovna retained a certain girlish and virginal appearance; her manner towards her husband was very shy and charming; she never let a sign of

endearment or familiarity escape her in the presence of any third person. This used to amuse the old warrior mightily, and he would assure us that Yevgenia Stepanovna was not always so frigid and inaccessible. They invariably treated each other with distant politeness in company, saving "You" instead of "Thou," which ceremoniousness, just at first. might be mistaken for coldness. But when you observed how attentive each was to the other; how they continually gazed in each other's eyes; how a word or a movement on the part of one would attract the instant notice of the other: vou were forced to the conclusion that Yevgenia Stepanovna lived only for her Vasili Vasilyevitsch, and Vasili Vasilyevitsch -though less unobtrusively-only for his Yevgenia Stepanovna. Their little abode fairly glittered with cleanliness and daintiness, and possessed an ineffable charm of homeliness and peace. You could hardly say that their tastes were similar, but the two widely-differing tones united in one harmonious life-symphony. Par exemple, Yevgenia Stepanovna adored cats and dogs (and, be it here remarked these animals were never encouraged in any dirty or destructive habits in her house); Vasili Vasilyevitsch, on the contrary, disliked them profoundly: but actually the ugly, hoarsevoiced Kalmuck dog, with his tongue hanging out of one side of his mouth, was precious to him because it was Yevgenia Stepanovna's pet; and he would feed and caress the surly animal with great kindness, merely out of a feeling of gratitude to his wife. Even the marmot (who spent the winter in a cosy spot under the stove, and who used to amuse his mistress as much as he irritated his master, by his playful habit of carrying off the latter's slippers and hiding them so cunningly that their owner was very frequently compelled to get out of bed barefoot; and sometimes was unable to recover his property during the whole day)—even this mischievous bobac was kindly treated by Vasili Vasilyevitsch. Everything was in its right place in the little dwelling, and was in better trim than in anyone else's house. The dogs and cats were betterfed and better-mannered; the singing birds were more joyous and warbled more beautifully; the plants were more flourishing. When anyone—as frequently happened—gave Yevgenia Stepanovna a pot of withered flowers, she managed

somehow to restore them to their former freshness and colour and to increase their beauty, until the original possessor, as often as not, begged them back again. In her little room carob trees and date palms, vines raised from grape stones, and other plants which require a warm temperature, grew in profusion. There was a feeling, both vivifying and comforting in the atmosphere, which set plants and animals alike at their ease, compensating the former for the loss of their freedom and the latter for the warmth of their native climate. Vasili Vasilvevitsch and Yevgenia Stepanovna helped each other in the little household, and without any effort whatever, they were able to produce dainties in greater abundance, earlier in the season, and of a better quality than other folks! They used to gather berries and mushrooms together, and to catch splendid trout in their own little stream, exulting over every capture. And what a to-do if either of them fell sick! Then indeed the full depth of this mutual, earnest, and tender, affection could be gauged—an affection which was not flaunted on ordinary occasions. . . . But I must refrain from adding other details, as this would carry me far beyond the bounds of my narrative. I will only remark that in after years, when I so frequently visited this retired spot and would spend a couple of hours contemplating this modest and obscure existence, I would yield to its gentle influence and ask myself the question: is not this the true happiness of life—to know nothing of those questions which have no answers—nothing of unsatisfied desires—nothing of passion and tumultuous feeling? The harmony of this life resounded in melodious echoes within my soul; and for long I experienced a soft melancholy—a feeling of regret for the loss of something which, so it seemed, had been so easy to obtain, had I but stretched out my hand to take it. But when I put the question plainly to myself: "Would you really like to be Vasili Vasilyevitsch?" I was horrified at the idea, and my emotion vanished utterly.

My father had kept his promise: he had bought me a light gun with a very handy butt, very prettily chased, and a somewhat long barrel (after the fashion of the English fowling-pieces of that time), equipped with silver sights. By some means or other he had procured it for only fifteen roubles, and that

although the gun was Tula-work1 and was worth at least twice or even thrice its price, even in those days. It would carry excellently for fifty paces. The very first shot I fired-(I killed a crow)—decided my future fate: I became a fanatical shot. The next day I shot a duck and two woodcock, and after that I was positively beside myself. Fishing and fowling were utterly forgotten and abandoned; and, absorbed by my predestined passion, I spent the whole of the day roaming about with my gun, and dreamt solely of it by night. And so passed the following days. Grigori Ivanovitsch, who only caught sight of me at rare intervals and then always found me occupied by my shooting, waited, vainly hoping that I should suggest studying with him. He told my mother all about our agreement; and she advised me to ask him to give me a lesson, for two hours daily, on any subject that he might select. This advice was by no means to my liking, but I did At first Grigori Ivanovitsch could not as I was bidden. observe my pitiful mien and doleful countenance without laughing: but when I had opened a French book and set to work to translate it (or rather, had begun to blunder along, my mind in such a state of distraction that I really did not know what I was reading for ducks and snipes flew before my eves and their cries rang in my ears) then my tutor drew his evebrows together, took the book out of my hand, and promptly administered a severe lecture to me, fully an hour long. He strode from one corner of the room to the other, while admonishing me to battle against my pernicious charactesistic of devoting myself to some object or pursuit in such a distorted and exaggerated degree that everything else was entirely neglected and laid aside. Alack! I heard nothing and understood less of his golden precepts, sage advice, and convincing arguments; which were all wasted upon the empty air.

Observing the utter inefficiency of his exhortations, Grigori Ivanovitsch decided to employ other means: he left me alone for a whole week, suffering me to range around with my gun from morning to night—hoping, no doubt, that I should grow

¹ A niello-work, done chiefly on silver, executed largely at Tula, in Russia. [Tr.]

tired of my new toy and, being satiated with pleasure, would listen to the voice of reason. All in vain! the gun was never out of my hand, I lost my appetite, slept badly, was burnt nearly as black as a nigger by the sun, and grew visibly thinner. My tutor, who began really to fear for my health, adopted a new plan, which he had vainly recommended to my mother for some time past, without, however inducing her to consent to it: he hung up the gun on a peg and forbade me to shoot at all. I cannot think of my behaviour during the four-andtwenty hours which followed this interdiction without laughing and blushing! I wept, screamed like a little child, rolled on the floor, tore my hair, and very nearly tore my books and cahiers to bits too. Only the distress of my mother and my father's mild counsels prevented me from committing stupid and senseless acts. The next day I had recovered my senses: and on the third I was able to take an interest in my lessons. and to recite my favourite poems with enthusiasm and pleasure. On the fourth day my composure was fully restored, and the cloud cleared from my tutor's stormy brow. During the past few days he had scarcely spoken to me, and had stared at me either sternly or with contemptuous pity. But now he was all sympathy, and talked to me so kindly and reasonably that I was quite won over. I was so ashamed of my conduct and so angry with myself that I nearly shed tears; and. proceeding from one extreme to another, I vowed I would renounce the gun for ever! This was by no means what Grigori Ivanovitsch desired: he quite disapproved of my resolve and proposed that I should shoot daily, either during the morning until dinner time or during the whole of the afternoon; while, at the same time. I was to devote three or four hours to earnest study of history and geography-two subjects in which I was not so proficient as the other advanced pupils. And now time proceeded methodically and merrily

During this month, when my parents had been able to talk in undisturbed freedom and friendship with Grigori Ivanovitsch, they had come to realise and appreciate both his intellect and his excellent moral qualities (united as these were to extreme culture and scholarship) in a still greater degree. My mother, from the extreme love she bore me, sought in every way to make me understand the type of man

which it had been my good fortune to secure as a tutor. In him she recognised an especial gift of God. I not only perfectly understood what my mother said, but I realised this for myself. I assured her (unfortunately I could never quite succeed in convincing her) that I, too, felt a great affection and respect for Grigori Ivanovitsch; and that I had only been momentarily estranged from him by getting back to the country and all my beloved friends and amusements, and by the charm of shooting with the gun, which was quite a new toy for me. I told her that when we two were together in the town, my sole thought was how I could I please and gratify my tutor, and that one kind word from him was sufficient to make me quite happy.

My darling sister and bosom friend was growing up, and had become a remarkably beautiful girl. She could no longer join me in my country pastimes and sports, and was much less frequently in my company, but she saw how happy I was and bore our separation with resignation. All the same she objected to my lessons, and for this reason was somewhat hostile towards my tutor.

We left Aksakovo on the 10th of August and reached Kazan on the 15th, having had no adventures on the way. To my great astonishment Grigori Ivanovitsch peremptorily ordered me not to attend my classes at the Gymnasium, but set me various exercises and other work to do at home. He himself went each morning to attend the Conference, of which he was secretary, and was always absent a long time. At last, at the end of five days, he remarked that the Gymnasium classes were not yet in full working order, as a great many pupils had not yet returned; and as the weather was so wonderfully fine, it would be a good idea to go and visit Ivan Ipatovitsch at Koschtschakovo and spend a pleasant week studying, and tramping about. I was very much surprised at, but equally pleased with, the proposal. We spent not one week-but almost three-at Koschtschakovo: Ivanovitsch visited the city once or twice, leaving early in the morning and returning only for a late dinner. I had ceased to think anything more about the subject. We returned to Kazan in due course, and the next day Grigori Ivanovitsch told me to go to school as usual. I ran off in very good spirits

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to the Gymnasium, but on my arrival my schoolfellows met me with grave faces and told me the following sad news.

I must begin by explaining that Lichatshey, the Director of the Gymnasium, was a most objectionable man, and in addition to this was of a most unprepossessing appearance. Amongst other personal disadvantages his underlip was as thick and swollen as if it had been stung by a poisonous gnat or a wasp. Neither the officials and tutors, nor the pupils, had the least respect for him; and even before I set off on my last holidays, he had been openly insulted and hooted by the boys, as he passed through the refectory during dinner—they being enraged at the bad soup, in which one of them had discovered the end of a tallow candle. That very same night, many walls, both inside and outside the Gymnasium, and even the dome of the building, were covered with inscriptions insulting the Director; these were printed in big capital letters, in red chalk. Many of these inscriptions were done at such a height that it was evident a ladder had been employed for the work; and as for the writing inside the dome—it was obviously the work of a very bold and skilful person; the perpetrators were never discovered, neither at the time, nor later. To this day I have no idea who they were. Some days before I and Grigori Ivanovitsch had left Aksakovo, when nearly all the pupils had reassembled at the Gymnasium, the following incident had occurred. A discharged soldier who. for some unknown reason, had been appointed Quartermaster and placed in command of all the military pensioners at the Gymnasium, was angered by one of these latter, whom he beat savagely with a stick in the courtyard at the rear; which was separated by a fence from the spacious and well-swept forecourt where all the boys were playing and enjoying themselves. The cries of the poor soldier aroused such compassion in these young hearts that certain pupils of the Upper School, Alexander Knäschevitsch among them, disobeyed the strict rule of the Gymnasium by opening the wicket, entering the back courtyard, and ordering the Quartermaster to cease flogging the delinquent. The Quartermaster, who was highly indignant at this interference with his authority, flew into a rage and began to abuse the scholars in the coarsest way: and as Alexander Knäschevitsch-by reason of his warm-

hearted and impetuous disposition—was the most excited of the party and stood in advance of the rest, all the insults and abuse were directed straight at him. Hearing shouts and curses, all the boys from the Upper School, followed by the younger pupils, flocked into the backyard. The older Knäschevitsch, Dimitri, recognising the voice of his beloved brother. was the first to dash forward. He was naturally of a hasty temper, and took his brother's side with great energy: the other pupils supported him. There was no lack of strong language and even threats; and the Quartermaster deemed it prudent to release the victim and to beat a hasty retreat. This insignificant affair, which was actuated by a worthy sentiment of pity and just anger over an act of coarse and unjustified cruelty, had very dire results, simply because the Director was quite incapable of comprehending magnanimity and regarded the matter as an offence. The pupils of the Upper School next presented a written petition, in which they humbly requested that the savage and objectionable Ouartermaster should be dismissed his post; but the Director declined to receive the petition and threatened some of them with chastisement. As was to be expected, this injustice irritated the young men: the respectful petition, thus repulsed, was changed to a threatening demand, and open defiance of school discipline arose. The pupils in the Upper School ceased attending their classes, and declared they would not recommence lessons until the detested Quartermaster had been dismissed the Gymnasium. The Middle School lost no time in following their seniors' lead; and at last all—from the youngest to the eldest pupil—joined in the mutiny, the whole tumult being headed by Dimitri Knaschevitsch, who was exceedingly popular with his schoolfellows, simply because his brother, Alexander, one of the head-pupils, had been subjected to insulting treatment. The Director grew very nervous: he did not venture to shew himself to the boys, entering and quitting the Gymnasium when he had to attend the Conference by a door leading from Yakovkin's house. He sent conciliatory messages to the pupils, begging them to discuss the matter amicably; but nothing came of the negotiations. There is not the slightest doubt that if our good, old, universally-honoured and beloved Vasili Petrovitsch

Upadyschevski had been in his post as Chief Inspector. the whole unfortunate affair would have been nipped in the bud: (but he had been absent on sick leave for some weeks previous to the event, and a quite insignificant person was fulfilling his duties at the time). Matters remained in this uncertain condition for some three days or so. Then, somehow or other, the scholars got to know that the Director was attending the Conference. They instantly placed a guard over Yakovkin's door, and a number of them crowded round the principal entrance to the Committee room and loudly demanded the Quartermaster's dismissal. The Director wished to make his escape, but when he was told that his private way was barred and that a good many pupils were waiting for him at the back entrance to the Gymnasium, he grew so terrified that he quite lost his presence of mind, and even consented to draw up the necessary papers for the dismissal of the reprehensible Quartermaster. The resolution was read aloud to the pupils, who immediately grew quiet, thanked him for his decision, and resumed their attitude of obedience. The Gymnasium classes were held in their usual order, and everything went on in the old way. Meanwhile the Director sent a report of the affair to the Council and, after some discussion with the Governor, they decided on taking the following measures. Some days later, while the pupils were at dinner. soldiers armed with guns and bayonets suddenly entered the dining hall, followed by the Governor and the Director. The latter called out the names of sixteen pupils of the Upper School, including, of course, the elder Knäschevitsch, and the owners of these names were promptly removed to the Gymnasium lock-up under guard. The rest of the pupils were petrified with terror, and a deathly stillness reigned in the hall. At each entrance to the Gymnasium a couple of soldiers. with fixed bayonets, were posted; while four kept guard outside the lock-up. A fortnight after this doleful event. I entered the so-sadly-reduced Upper School for the first time after my return from the holidays, or, properly speaking, from Koschtschakovo, and was immediately informed by my schoolfellows of the recent happenings. Now I could fully understand why my prudent tutor had not permitted me to attend my classes, but had taken me off into the country.

There is not the slightest doubt but I should have taken an active part in the unlucky business. At the end of six weeks the Council announced their decision. The Governor, the Director, and the whole Committee, made their appearance in the refectory: a proclamation was read aloud, which stated the offences of the mutinous pupils and added that, by way of a warning and an example to the remainder, eight scholars from the Upper School—the ringleaders of the movement— Dimitri Knäschevitsch, Peter Alechin, Pachomov, Syromyatinkov, and Krylov-(I forget the names of the others)-were to be expelled from the Gymnasium without farther notice. The expelled boys were our finest scholars. Dimitri Knäschevitsch and Alechin were the pride and ornament of the After the sentence, which filled all present with terror and dismay, had been pronounced, the military guard was removed from the Gymnasium, and the state of siege, which had mortified us greatly, was raised. Lichatschev himself was dismissed shortly afterwards, and in his place the head master, J. F. Yakovkin, was elected Director. Dimitri Knäschevitsch kept in constant communication with his old schoolfellows for a long time. He entered a Government Office at Petersburg, and wrote nearly every post to his brother, frequently sending messages to us all. His letters were always read aloud solemnly to the whole class.

The youthful population of the Gymnasium, which at first had been very downcast and subdued, gradually regained its former spirits; and, forgetting the recent disaster, began once more to shout, sing, laugh, and romp about. . . . Life flowed on as tranquilly as before, as if nothing had ever happened to disturb it.

My studies at school and at home pursued their peaceful course under the constant guidance and supervision of Grigori Ivanovitsch until the middle of the winter, when my uncle, A. N. Subov, came on a visit to Kazan. He took me twice to the theatre (with my tutor's permission of course), and we saw the opera, Love of Song, and the comedy, The Sister Purchased from her Brother. These two performances had almost the same effect on me as the gun. I had always had a great fancy for the drama; and when anyone described a play to me, I used to picture the scenes to myself to the best

of my ability. But the enchanting reality far exceeded my expectations. I could only dream of the two pieces which I had seen. Day and night my mind was so absorbed by them that I was absolutely unable to study. Naturally, this did not escape Grigori Ivanovitsch's notice; he crossexamined me, and very soon elicited the cause of my distoaction of mind. My worthy tutor scowled horribly and then grew very cross, and I was compelled once more to listen to a long lecture. But on this occasion I quite realised the justice of Grigori Ivanovitsch's rebuke, and could recognise the evil consequences of my habit of extravagant enthusiasm. By dint of exerting my will to its utmost degree. I succeeded in bringing my feverish passion for the play under control. The germ of this predilection had lain in my mind for long enough; and the pleasure that I had always felt when reciting or reading Russian or French plays and poetry was the earliest expression of this taste; still I managed to compose myself and applied myself to my lessons with great energy. Grigori Ivanovitsch was delighted. At the end of a week, he began to discuss the theatre and dramatic art with me, giving me a juster conception of the drama and telling me a great deal about past and present actors, both native and foreign. Amongst others he mentioned the Moscow actors, Schuscherin and Plavilschikov. These chats, which I found so delightful, took place between lessons and extended over some three days. And one fine day, as I sat drinking tea after my return from afternoon school at the Gymnasium, Grigori Ivanovitsch suddenly opened the door of the room, and said cheerily: "Make haste, and finish your milk-drinking.1 I want you to come out with me at once." I was ready in a moment. We got into a sledge and were driven off. I was pretty certain we were going to see Monsieur G. K. Voskresenski, whose son was one of my schoolfriends, and to whose house we were now and then invited. At the corner of the street Grigori Ivanovitsch gave the driver orders to go straight up Grusinskaia Street. This was not the way to the Voskresenski's house, and I was very much puzzled.

¹ I was excessively fond of milk, and used to take so much cream in my tea that Grigori Ivanovitsch declared it was nothing but milk, and used to call me a sucking-calf, which I considered a great sign of amiability on his part.

In a minute or two we arrived at the playhouse, and he said: "Stop at the entrance to the theatre!" The driver obeyed. and Grigori Ivanovitsch sprang out of the sledge, while I, petrified with joyful expectation, sat motionless. Grigori could not help laughing at me, and enquired: "Why, what's the matter? Don't you want to go into the theatre with me?" I jumped out, nearly beside myself with rapture. My tutor had taken our tickets beforehand, so we entered the parquet and seated ourselves side-by-side in the front row of seats. They were performing the opera of The Sausage Makers. Heavens! how enchanted I was! At this very moment I can see the actor, Michail Kalmuck, in the leading rôle of the old sausage-dealer; and in my ears still rings the ditty of Prytkov, sung to a guitar accompaniment, that's to say, he only opened his mouth, while the actress, Marsuscha Anikieva, sang behind the scene:

"My heart burns like fire
For thee . . . my desire.
Ah, pity and hear me,
And let thy love cheer me."

But it is more than fifty years since I saw this piece, and since then I have never witnessed another performance of the opera of The Sausage Makers. On our return home I thanked my tutor most heartily, and was overioved on hearing that this evening's visit to the opera was by way of a reward for my good conduct: and, farther, that if I didn't let the memory of the Sausage Makers distract me from my work. we should have an occasional evening at the play together. To tell the truth, the Sausage Makers caused me no little distraction and absence of mind, but I did my utmost to conceal my wandering thoughts and, thanks to my good and trusty memory. I went ahead at such a rate that Grigori Ivanovitsch observed nothing. Within a short time I saw performances of: The Milksop, The Mistakes of a Day, the opera of Nina, or the Madness of Love, and Kotzebue's play, Count Waltron. My love for the theatre waxed stronger each day that passed. I learnt every piece that I had seen performed by heart; and, quite unknown to my tutor, I found time and opportunity to play each rôle in the afore-mentioned dramas

for my own private delectation; shutting myself up in my room or in the cold and deserted entresol.

During this same winter of 1804, I became more intimately acquainted with another paying pupil, Alexander Panaiev, who, like myself, was a great amateur of the theatre and of Russian literature. Being also an enthusiastic admirer of Karamzin, he was much given to writing prose idylls in which he sought to imitate the polish and luxuriant fancy of the poet's finished style. His brother, Ivan, was a lyric poet. In those days Alexander Panaiev was producing a written periodical entitled Arcadian Shepherds, some numbers of which I still possess. All contributors adopted an Arcadian pseudonym, such as Adonis, Daphnis, Amyntas, Iris, Damon, Palamon, etc. Alexander Panaiev wrote a beautiful hand and could draw very well. He used to make copies of his monthly magazine, which he illustrated with little sketches of his own. Verily, children in a twofold degree: our literature was in its childhood, and we ourselves were but children in vears. It is worthy of record, however, that the bias of all this literary activity and even the outward appearance of the little publication were practically the same as the literature and magazine which maintained supremacy in Russia for many a decade.

Thanks to the extreme circumspection of my tutor, I had not, so far, attempted any composition of my own; nor had I contributed anything to the magazine. Unfortunately the temptation proved too strong for me, and I began to write in secret, concealing the fact even from my friend Panaiev. This winter, for the first time, dramatic performances were given at the Gymnasium. On two occasions we had some tiresome and highly moral plays acted, the titles of which I quite forget, followed by a little comedy of Sumarokov, The Stolen Dowry. I was only a spectator at these performances, first because many of the amateur players were older than myselt; and secondly, because I had not dared tell Grigori Ivanovitsch a word about the plays.

Already for the past year there had been rumours that a University was to be founded in Kazan. These rumours were finally confirmed and, in December, 1804, it was officially announced that the Emperor had signed a decree authorising

the foundation of the University on the 5th of November of that same year. The Acting Councillor of State, Stepan Yakovlevitsch Rumovski, who had recently arrived in Kazan, was appointed Curator. The appointment was not popular in the city and very obnoxious to the Gymnasium, especially to the Upper School. The Conference met daily, presided over by Rumovski: the other members being two professors who had accompanied him to Kazan-MM. German and Zeplin—the Director of the Gymnasium, Yakovkin, and all the head-tutors. What they arranged among themselves was unknown to both me and my schoolfellows. One evening, however, a great many guests met at our house: the two newly-arrived professors, the Secretary to the Curator, a man of the name of Peter Ivanovitsch Sokolov, and all the Upper masters at the Gymnasium, with the exception of Yakovkin who only made his appearance much later after I had been sent to bed. The visitors were very merry, and made such a talk and commotion that it was long before I could fall asleep, and I lay awake listening to their conversation and mutual congratulations. They discussed the future University, and the nomination of the Gymnasium Staff as assistants and professors. Next day Yevsevitsch told me that the party had not broken up until three o'clock in the morning: they had drunk lots of punch and wine, and many of them had been exceedingly jolly when the time arrived for getting home again. He added that "Ours" (as he called Grigori Ivanovitsch) had not hesitated to join in the conviviality, but had not been in the least intoxicated. As drinking-parties never took place in our house, we were both of us very much astonished, although the reason was pretty evident; for Yevseyitsch had heard, and so had I, that Grigori Ivanovitsch had been appointed an Assistant Professor at the new University, along with Ivan Ipatovitsch, Levizki, and Erich. Amongst other things I had heard that Yakovkin had been promptly appointed regular Professor of Russian History and nominated as Inspector of all State students, which caused no little indignation among those present, as they held that such rapid promotion of Yakovkin, considering his lack of scientific knowledge, was quite unprecedented. I likewise heard Grigori Ivanovitsch exclaim, when the talk turned on the

students themselves: "I'll go bail for my Telemachus, gentlemen!" I gathered from this that I was to be included amongst the students, a thing I had never dared to even hope. as I had not completed the Upper School course and was very shaky in mathematics. Next morning Grigori Ivanovitsch was still asleep when I started for the Gymnasium. I lost no time in imparting my news to my companions; but they had already heard all about the matter from Yakovkin's son, a terribly fat boy, of very inferior abilities. He boasted that he was to be one of the first students, which made everyone laugh. The head-scholars of the Upper School, who had already gone through the course twice, naturally expected to be promoted as students: but no one gave me and the younger scholars a moment's consideration. But that very same day a list of those scholars who were nominated as students in the new University was read out, and this included myself, Yakovkin, and every member of the Upper School, with the exception of two or three boys. Strictly speaking, some ten or so of these pupils, myself among them, did not merit the promotion, owing to our youth and deficient knowledge; and I may as well admit that we knew no Latin whatever and very little German. For this reason we were to attend special classes in Latin and German until the following autumn. But just at the moment we were all filled with the greatest joy, which manifested itself in loud cheers. We all embraced and congratulated each other, and vowed that we would work untiringly to acquire the necessary knowledge, so that at the end of the appointed time we might justly claim to be called students. The Latin classes were immediately arranged, and the greater part of the future students lost no time in beginning to study this language. Out of some foolish prejudice against Latin. I did not follow their praiseworthy example; and to this day I cannot understand how it came about that Grigori Ivanovitsch, who was a notable Latin scholar, should have permitted me to omit this branch of learning.

One can only look back with feelings of mingled delight and respect at the love of culture and knowledge which inspired the hearts and minds of all the senior scholars of the Gymnasium. These youths not only studied by day, but also

at night. They grew thin, their faces were pale and altered. and the Committee finally were compelled to draw up a set of rules somewhat to reduce this too-fiery zeal. The acting Inspector for the day used to patrol the dormitories at night, extinguishing all lights and forbidding any talking, because the boys persisted in hearing each other repeat their tasks from memory in the dark. Even the tutors took advantage of this fever for learning to induce their pupils not only to study while in class, but during all their hours of recreation and during the holidays. Grigori Ivanovitsch taught applied mathematics, at home, to the most advanced of the future students; and the other tutors followed his example. And so matters pursued their way during the year following the opening of the University. A beautiful and a precious time! A season of the purest love of learning! A season of noble enthusiasm! I speak impartially, as I had no share in this lofty labour of intellect, which was borne by the State Alumni and the Pensioners alone. We paying pupils, strange to relate, took but little part in the competition; and my own education pursued its ordinary course under the guidance of my tutor. Probably he was of opinion that I should never make a scholar; and probably he erred in thus thinking. He judged by the passionate love for literature and the drama which was so pronounced in me. Still it appears to me that natural history possessed an equal charm for me; and perhaps I might have achieved distinction as a professor. However my parents had never destined me for a learned career: they were even prejudiced against the idea; and, in accordance with their wishes. Grigori Ivanovitsch directed my education in a given direction. . . . Naturally our University was somewhat of a precocious fruit, as it was opened only six weeks after the foregoing events, on the 14th February, 1805. There were but six University tutors in existence at the start: two Professors: Yakovkin and Zeplin and four Assistant-Professors: Kartaschevski, Sapolski, Levizki and Erich.

During this year of 1805, an especial interest in political matters was aroused in us by Dimitri Knäschevitsch's letters, which were always hailed with the greatest delight and listened to with the deepest interest. At that date the first war with Napoleon was proceeding, and I cannot explain

how it was that all other military information reached us so scantily and tardily, while Knäschevitsch's news came so promptly and in such full detail. What glowing enthusiasm for the glory of Russian arms was aroused by his letters, which had a positively electrifying effect upon us. Scarcely could Alexander Knäschevitsch exclaim: "A letter from my brother!" but he would be instantly surrounded by a swarming and friendly crowd, pressing around him and leaning on one another's shoulders, who would listen to the letter in deepest silence, broken only occasionally by exclamations of delight. Even the town scholars would come running up to join us in listening to the letter. The glorious Bagration was our hero, and when we heard how he-voluntarily left behind to fight a rear action—had cut his way through the whole French army, there arose such a thundering Hurrah and such an outbreak of spontaneous and overwhelming enthusiasm, that my pen utterly fails me to describe it. Ah, yes, we led a stirring life in our youth, and it warms my heart when I recollect it!

Those pupils who had been nominated students were not required to pass any examination, neither by the Gymnasium. nor by the University authorities, but applied the whole of their time to improving their education, in order to prepare themselves for listening to the University lectures. I cannot guess why Grigori Ivanovitsch packed me off on my holidays some time before Speech Day; but, so it was, and I and Yevsevitsch travelled to Old-Aksakovo, in the Government of Simbirsk, where all my family were then living. actual reason for this migration from New-Aksakovo in Orenburg was, and always has been, a mystery to me, but I was very ill-pleased at it. There was no fishing to be had in an arid district like that of Old-Aksakovo, and very little shooting either. There was certainly plenty of forest game, and snipe and woodcock were to be found; but this laborious sort of sport was beyond my strength. As I had anticipated this state of things, I took the precaution of providing myself with a stock of plays to wile away my time at home at my ease, and even to perform them for the family's amusement; an occupation which afforded me no little pleasure in those days. My parents were much gratified at my nomination as

a University student: it was only with difficulty that I could convince them of the fact, and they regretted greatly that Grigori Ivanovitsch had not thought fit to keep me in Kazan over Speech Day, on which occasion the list of students' names was to be read in public, and each student was to be presented with his sword. Heavens, how my dear sister rejoiced over me! With what enraptured amazement she listened as I read tragedies, comedies, and even operas, aloud to the family—or, properly speaking, acted these dramas, for I attempted each actor's or actress's rôle: I rolled my r's, spoke through my nose, squeaked in the treble or growled in the bass, and sang in every possible voice and key: I even strutted about, dressed up in all sorts of old frippery. To all this fun was added another recreation; for, hearing that I was to attend the Natural History lectures, which were to start in the middle of August and which were to be delivered by Professor Fuchs (who had recently arrived at Kazan) I determined to make a collection of butterflies, and, aided by my sister. I set to work on this task during the remainder of the holidays. Alas, I knew nothing about the drying and mounting of my specimens and ruined great numbers of these enchanting creatures. During this vacation we paid two visits to Tschufarovo to see Nadeschda Ivanovna Kurovedova, and on each occasion she invited us to remain a whole week. Tschufarovo was situated only forty or fifty versts distant from Old-Aksakovo. Nadeschda Ivanovna was quite delighted to hear that I was elected a student, and mentioned the fact with great pride to each of her guests. She ordered my uniform to be made, and greatly deplored the misfortune of my possessing no sword. She also made me a present of ten roubles for the purchase of books. Hearing, quite by accident, of my penchant for the theatre (my parents had never dared to tell her about this predilection, as they were afraid she might disapprove of it) she requested me to give one of my recitals before her, accompanied by songs and gestures, and to my great joy she was excessively pleased and diverted by my efforts and laughed most heartily throughout the performance. She had never seen a play acted in her life before, and her lively, artless, and impressionable nature experienced a hitherto-unknown delight in my little recital. But what

especially charmed her was my ordinary reading aloud. When, as frequently happened during the winter time, she felt bored and tired of playing cards, singing the songs then in fashion, or listening to gossip and chatter, she was fond of listening while the latest novels and romances were read aloud to her. She had always been dissatisfied with the way in which these works were read-my mother's reading alone pleased her. But after she had listened to me a while, she exclaimed: "Ah, that is the way to read!" and, although it was summer time, a season she usually spent out-of-doors in her beautiful garden, she insisted on my reading to her for two hours, or even longer, every day. Many a time did Ablesimov's Miller or Knäschnin's Lemonade-Seller tread the boards, and how clearly and pleasantly my relative's laughter rang out as I—a boy—played the part of the ancient Miller or the equally venerable Lemonade-Seller! Nadeschda Ivanovna grew to love me dearly, a circumstance which caused no small satisfaction in my family—as the thought of the rich inheritance which she so frequently had promised to bequeathe to us could not fail to excite hopes and speculation in any human breast.

When we were leaving, she expressed a fervent wish that I should write twice a month to her—a practice which I continued until her death,

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